

# **LIFE AND LETTERS**

**AND THE LONDON MERCURY**

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**Vol. 57**

**APRIL 1948**

**No. 128**

**EDITED BY ROBERT HERRING**

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**1/6**

# THE WELSH REVIEW

*Editor : GWYN JONES*

Vol. VII, No. 1, Spring, 1948, Number contains :—

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# EDITORIAL

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*April, 1948*

THIS number is introduced—vigorously, as it should be, being Jamaican—by Phyllis Bottome. She is followed by the first of the ensuing Jamaican writers on one of his country's burning topics, federation. I myself have promised not to waste space on 'hurriedly didactic observations by a short-term visitor', so there come now no comments from me. Indeed, I may be held to have made sufficient already, having written much lately in Editorials on Jamaican writing, whilst my voice will have been heard overseas (18th April) broadcasting in the 'Caribbean Voices' of the B.B.C., I hope not too presumptuously, on 'What I Look for in West Indian Literature'. Briefly, it was vigour, wit, and a realization of the almost unrivalled riches at hand as untapped material with which to give form in writing to man's hopes and despairs and endeavours. What I found, follows in these pages and may be left to speak for itself, I think in those terms.

For myself, as I assembled the number I was reminded of how I came by it. Some of those memories may not be out of place here. I have already recounted the flight out, and something of the flight back, but little of the trip round the islands—soaring over Haiti, landing at San Domingo, the sudden surprising scene as island after island came into view beneath—Dutch Eustatius; Saba, little more than an extinct volcano, with its capital, called Bottom, perched in the crater, nine hundred feet up, its industry boat-building, though there is no wood on the island and the boats have to be lowered to the sea; St. Kitts, trim as a quarter-deck; Barbados, where they were digging for buried treasure, the Royal Yacht Club was comic and everything else rather sad; the good trip on British West Indian Airways, to Trinidad, where I was happy only when an out-of-work compositor said to me: 'Sleep? Dat's de short-cut to Death.'

Then, return—landing amid Venezuela's unlikely red mountains . . . and with equal unlikelihood, to me never out

of Europe before, seeing Aruba, Curaçao, the Caymans, self-supporting through sale of postage-stamps to collectors, Grand Turk, with no direct taxation, the government existing on royalties from salt . . . and so down, over the harbour of Kingston, where this time we can pick out landmarks. And along the Palisadoes, not in dark this time, but back, back to Jamaica after another thousand miles, odd. Back! Yes, indeed. And to achieve—I will not say the main object of my journey, but a major ambition on the side; to get to the top of the Blue Mountain Peak.

No climbing, that. Mules met us two hours up, at Mavis Bank. But I hadn't ridden since Iceland, twenty years past, and never before on a mule, so as far as I was concerned it was as adventurous. I can confirm that—to a mule—the sweetest grass is that on, or preferably under, the edge of a precipice. There's a good deal to be said, too, for the leaves of a branch which will then fling back into your rider's [*sic*] face. And, of course, no water is so good as that which, when fording a river, is in the fastest middle. Some hours of this, and we discovered—no rum. So Eustace, a 'trickified' guide, who had already volunteered the information that the 'obeah situation fairly quiet', went off across the hills to acquire some.

At the top, we had one moment of sparkling clear view of Port Royal, and long lines of coast. Then mist came down. Smoke came out, as the cook-boys lit a fire which warmed nothing but filled the bunkroom with blinding fumes. Rum came, however, Eustace having been delayed by an interlude with a wild hog, and our party was added to by a wandering youth who, hearing four of his people and me, one buckra, were up on the peak, came with guitar.

We were even gladder for that next morning, for it rained on the way down, and as we sheltered under banana trees, he played . . . 'Jesu, lover of my soul,' which turned to a rumba.

Another expedition, again as sole white, to the home of an overseer on a sugar plantation. A bachelor establishment this, of high hospitality, fine cooking, and the best rum I met. Then to Milk River to bathe for an hour in medicinal baths, and talk to a mosquito-control officer, 'good bathing here, sah, though somewhat dangerous, 'count of alligators.' Back, past

broad acres my host did not inherit, owing to his white father's choice of a coloured mother for him, and so to see the wages for the first three days of Christmas week for two hundred workers—a mere £70. For your sugar worker gets only twelve and six a week, and does not work half the year. . . . Sad facts these, sobering facts. Angry and tragic facts to set against the goodness of market on Christmas Eve, the kindness of my friends (strangers when I landed) and the strong brave dignity of peasants met in the hills, on the roads; a people too noble for poverty were the world as it would take little effort to make it if more hearts were like theirs.

That is what I found, and why I hope these memories perhaps will not seem irrelevant, but will be looked into for what is beneath them; not sight-seeing but soul-searching.

\* \* \*

I am sorry that owing to lack of space and abundance of material, several contributions have had to be held over. These include Mr. Clinton Black's study of women-pirates in the Caribbean, further stories by R. L. C. Aarons, V. S. Reid, and W. G. Ogilvie, as well as poems by George Campbell, Vivian L. Virtue, Kenneth Brian Scott. These will appear in forthcoming issues, and I should like to thank for their help, Mr. Wycliffe Bennett, of the Poetry League of Jamaica, Mr. V. S. Reid, who has at my request acted as Assistant Editor in Jamaica, and Mr. Oswell Blakeston, who performed the same office here.

# ‘THE PIRATE’S ISLE’

---

## PHYLLIS BOTTOME

JAMAICA is the most harmless of all tropical islands. It has no savage animals; a mongoose, not native but wisely imported, destroyed its snakes, and is probably the most ferocious animal on the Island to-day—except Man.

Even Man, before civilization under the cross wiped out Jamaica’s native inhabitants, was found to be gentle. The Arawaks, the Island’s original inhabitants, were a soft and golden race, easy for truculent visitors to sweep off the map.

The climates of Jamaica, and it has several climates, are temperate, and it is possible to change one for another in the course of an hour. To those who like perennial sunshine, seven or eight months of the year can pass without a drop of rain, while the northern portion of the Island, under the watershed of the Blue Mountains, is almost always wet.

There is bracing air to be found on the Malvern Ridge, or on the mountain slopes. The Trade Wind cools the nights and freshens the days over the whole Island.

Port Antonio, between its passionate showers, has a rainbow loveliness; within a few miles of its squalid, hurricane-wrecked little town, there lies a cove so beautiful that the observer cries like the hero of Shelley’s *Epipsychdion* :

‘She met me  
Robed in such exceeding glory  
That I beheld her not.’

Across the pale gold sands flows a little stream, broadening into jade green pools. The stream winds its way under orchid-fringed cliffs into a riotous blue sea. Shoals of iridescent fish shoot through the waves and flicker in and out of the transparent pools, while only a few yards away the white foam flies as high as a grove of coconut palms wandering close to the water’s edge. Humming-birds flash their jewelled windmills

in and out of cliff blossoms, and sailing on effortless broad pinions, flocks of snow white herons divide the azure of the sky from the deeper, more troubled azure, of the sea.

A few miles inland the Blue Mountains raise their wooded peaks, cut by sparkling streams and fern-fringed ravines. These mountains are difficult to explore, owing to a combination of impenetrable undergrowth and sharp black coral underfoot. Probably only the birds know every glade and waterfall on this enchanted Island.

It is sometimes difficult to believe that Jamaica is anything but a flower-embroidered tapestry hanging on an invisible wall, between one wave and another. Yet beauty is only one of the Island's many aspects. Desolate flat marshes, inhabited by alligators and sung over piteously by the wistful Savannah blackbirds; or destitute ramshackle villages haunted by undernourished scarecrows, are just as much a part of the Island's history. The story of Jamaica, on its human side, is one of infaceable cruelty and shame.

The strange infrequent disasters of Nature, occasional savage earthquakes and hurricanes, are mere child's play compared to the barbarous and unembarrassed crimes committed by man upon his fellows.

The Pirates began the business; but the Arawaks were merely discouraged and disturbed by the occasional visits of these unpleasant travellers. What might be called a gentlemen's agreement took place between natives and visiting Buccaneers. The Pirates, having introduced pigs to the Island (a race of animal that increased and multiplied with magnificent success) arranged with the natives to drive the pigs in droves to the nearest cove, when their signal fires gave notice that the Buccaneers had landed, and wished to enjoy one of their protracted picnics reinforced by roast pig.

In return for this service, the Arawaks were not murdered nor their villages destroyed except by accident, or if some special occasion arose which tempted the Buccaneers to a fit of ungrateful oblivion.

The enterprising Spaniards, however, when they took possession of the Island, finding that the Arawaks showed no great faculty for slave labour, promptly exterminated them,

rapidly replacing them by tougher Africans transported, with the utmost violence and cruelty, from their distant homes.

Seventeen per cent perished on the voyage; but not more than fifty per cent lived to be effective. Nor was the British Empire at all behindhand in barbarity, for as soon as we had conquered Jamaica from the Spaniards, we proceeded to carry on the same 'black-bird' trade, in a manner that, for sheer insensate cruelty, outrivalled Belsen under the Nazis.

Two hundred years of slavery, only given up in 1834 through the impassioned onslaught of the Baptist William Knibb upon the British Houses of Parliament, slowly changed into a more democratic, but at times hardly more beneficent, rule.

What are the inhabitants of the Island like to-day? No British visitor, however oblivious of Cain's responsibility for his brother Abel, can feel wholly indifferent to the Jamaican problems, since we so largely helped to fill the Island by compulsion with an alien people.

In 1937 the last Census revealed at least 1,152,528 human beings, and the last ten years have greatly increased the population. Fourteen to fifteen thousand only are white. Eighty per cent of Jamaicans are still illiterate. Even to-day only one child in four can achieve any education, lack of transport and malnutrition proving insuperable obstacles. Seventy per cent of the Island's children are without resident fathers and, far worse—though to be without a normal home life is a cruel handicap—markedly under-nourished. Yet Jamaica is the most fertile Island in the West Indies, nor have its resources yet been fully discovered or exploited. The unemployed are countless, and there is overcrowding in the towns and extreme destitution in both town and country. The Jamaican small holders, and these are among the best and happiest of the population, do not know how to make the most out of the land, and in the hill districts destroy its splendid potentialities through erosion.

To this day over 60 per cent of the finest agricultural land is the private property of some eight hundred white families. No doubt this has helped to preserve the land value, though at the cost of impoverishing thousands of human beings, who

might otherwise have lived successfully on it. The white residents of the Island, most of whom have lived there for several generations, do not vary very greatly from their ancestors—except in their power over others.

Some of them are beneficent people, who look after their land well, producing what they can from it, and paying their workpeople fairly for their labour. Nor are they often unkind, or more than mildly offensive, to their West Indian fellow-countrymen. There are even some white Planters who genuinely try to understand and improve the conditions of those who work for them; but, on the whole, they gleefully assert that West Indian people are sub-human, and they take a very gloomy view of the Island's future under a free West Indian Government.

A white minority, without the authority of the British Government to support them, could hardly be expected *not* to pine for the good old days, when the native population were completely under their thumb.

Nevertheless, after three hundred years of this salubrious control, on a healthy and highly fertile Island of 4,450 square miles, the many hospitals of Jamaica are crammed to the brim, sometimes two, or even three, patients in a bed; and a doctor in charge of one of these hospitals said to me a few months ago, 'Before I can start curing a patient of what he has come to the hospital for, I have to cure him of three other diseases—syphilis, malaria, and hookworm.' The one mental hospital of the Island, with nearly two thousand patients, had a short time ago, besides far too small and uninstructed a staff, only one presiding doctor—and he was not a trained psychiatrist. The child delinquency problem of Jamaica is on so vast a scale that constant laws are being passed to control it—but, so far, none of these laws has been satisfactorily carried out. The one skilled and valid attempt to deal with these children in 'Boys' Town' is very inadequately supported either by the Government or by the leading citizens of the Island, who are the first to clamour for penalties on these uncared-for children, for whose destitution—the main cause of their delinquency—they themselves are directly responsible.

When Great Britain voluntarily, but without much

circumspection, in 1944 presented Jamaica with its democratic constitution, it did very little to ensure that the Government fell into the right hands. No doubt, to invite the West Indies to govern themselves experimentally, while a shadow British Government stood handy in case of need, was a move in the right direction; but it was at least unfortunate to give universal suffrage simultaneously with the Constitution to a largely illiterate population without any safeguards or special training.

The present Prime Minister, Bustamante, was the sort of choice that should certainly have been avoided. No one is exactly like anyone else, but Bustamante appears to have every Hitlerian quality, except genius. He is power-mad and, like all prestige politicians, without fixed principles.

What is left of the British Government on the spot stands by his side, like a nervous mother watching over the first steps of an extremely impetuous and unsteady child.

There is no doubt that the present British Government, with the British people behind it, anxiously desire the welfare of the Island. They have sent out first-class experts to study the banana and coconut diseases, and to speed up recovery from the last devastating hurricane disaster of 1943. The new University for the entire West Indies is fixed close to Kingston. England has scraped its Treasury bare to send money for useful projects, much of which has been wasted owing to the tyrannical ignorance and obstinacy of Bustamante, or through faulty administration. Experts are not allowed the right terrain for their experiments, or else they find the soaring prices of Jamaica, and the housing shortage, prevent their salaries from covering their living expenses. So many go back to England shortly after their arrival, their mission a failure, and leaving the disappointed and discouraged Islanders to carry on much as they did before.

These misfortunes do not happen because the West Indians are incapable of governing themselves, but largely because 'big business' and a powerful white minority feel that they can more easily deal with a person who is ignorant and unscrupulous, such as Bustamante, than with a man of exceptional intelligence such as his political rival, Manley, whose integrity nobody doubts.



Norman Manley would have been the rational choice of an instructed populace. He is the present leader of the People's Party, and is certainly the kind of Prime Minister Jamaica needs. It would be funny—if it were not too fatal to be funny—to hear how all the powers of Mammon, the whole industrial and social hierarchy of Jamaica, speak of Manley, with the greatest respect—even sometimes with deep affection—but always ending up by saying uneasily, 'But Bustamante is our man!' So not so very long ago, the big German industrialists and their international backers said—and thought—of Hitler. From a psychological point of view, the general good of an overcrowded Island cannot be safeguarded by those of another race who despise the larger part of its population; but perhaps it is even more unsafe to entrust its future to venal politicians from the Island's own race, backed by business people of all nationalities, who merely wish to exploit the riches of the Island for their own interests.

Communists, of course, find a field for great activity, attaching themselves to the People's Party—since it is a minority Party on the side of the underdog—and stirring up trouble whenever it suits their purposes.

So the Island swings between its Fascist and Communist extremes like a microcosm of the larger world beyond its ocean walls. Nor does it seem a solution to Jamaica's problems to turn the Island into a Paradise for white tourists, as many suggest. Visitors from distant continents may be most valuable if they bring with them any value of their own, in fair exchange for their blissful holidays; but a few carefully run Palaces dotted about the beauty spots of the Island, filled with rich denizens from another Planet, do nothing to raise the living conditions of thousands of starving and unemployed people. They merely madden them by fantastic contrasts. A few taximen and boatmen, dizzy with expectation, profit by rich visitors; but should any ignorant West Indians be so misled as to look to these flying meteors for a higher form of life, he would be destined to be both shocked and disappointed.

The celebrated Montego Beach in the high season resembles nothing so much as a butcher's shop; and it would be difficult to decide which is worse, the manners or the morals, of those

who disport themselves on its rainbow-tinted shores. If white civilization has to stand or fall by these Jamaican visitors, there can be no doubt whatever which will be its choice.

Fortunately, Jamaica has never been without peculiarly fine and helpful white citizens; both saints and experts have given unstinted 'contributions, light has shone through their spirits into the darkest places of the Island and wherever it has penetrated misery and ignorance have fled before it.

Light would, no doubt, spread even farther if the saints would adjust their dogmas to the knowledge of the experts, or if the experts would occasionally show a little more tact in dealing with the saints. Even as it is, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Anglican Priests, and Quakers, have all made their splendid and ungrudging contributions side by side, if not hand in hand, with teachers, doctors, nurses, welfare and research workers. What has made expert and saint alike beloved and understood by the people they have worked amongst, has been the quality of their lives. It would be hard to find better Christians or more selfless experts than exist upon the Island of Jamaica.

Money is seldom behind them, though the Presbyterian Church of Scotland wrung out of its own small impoverished country ten thousand pounds to start Knox College at Spaldings as a Technical School and Training College for the West Indians. This new and lively community, if the hands of its young pioneers are sufficiently strengthened to fulfil their purpose, should have a splendid future.

In the heart of the Kingston slums (it is to be hoped the worst slums in the world) there is a little space of kindness and hope brought to its exposed and vice-ridden children in 'Boys' Town' by the Reverend Hugh Sherlock, a Methodist minister. 'Boys' Town' trains a few hundred children's lives into decency and usefulness, when thousands might be so trained if the rich business people or the present Government sufficiently supported Hugh Sherlock's efforts.

As for the experts, Jamaica has been extraordinarily blessed by its small band of helpers. They are the pick of both white and dark people working together with equal courage and intelligence: teachers, doctors, nurses, welfare and research

workers, doing their jobs beyond all praise against insuperable difficulties, and except by a few individuals here and there, not generously supported by those who profit most from the Island's resources. Yet even these great forces, at work through a mere handful of people, cannot do more than touch the fringe of Jamaica's economic and social problems.

Such problems remain the business (and perhaps this is the most hopeful part of it—that they *are* the business—) of the West Indians themselves. It is true that the larger part of the West Indian population has been hitherto too wretched and too ignorant to do much to help themselves, though those in the country districts with their own small holdings are often shrewd and sensible people, who could easily acquire the knowledge of hygiene and agricultural economy needed to improve their living conditions.

Trading for and with these people are a mixed and intelligent population of Syrians, Jews, Indians, and Chinese. Many of these traders care only for money like the big industrialists; but they have a potential value to the Island and, if industry were planned for the good of the people, these traders' contribution could be of extreme value.

The most immediately helpful and disinterested section of the Jamaican world, however, is its own educated West Indians. These people come sometimes from unmixed African descent, but oftener from mixed blood, and unless the observer is a victim to Goebbel's philosophy, he is bound to admit that they are amongst the most outstanding and successful human beings to be found anywhere. In the old slave days, marriage was not permitted between white men and their slaves, but as few white women were available, many of the planters chose (and often had specially educated) as their life-companions, slave women. The result of these common-law marriages are a remarkably fine set of descendants. Black or coloured, these educated Jamaicans are specially gifted with dynamic, warm-hearted natures and keen intelligences.

It is a pleasure to visit the schools all over the Island, for those children who are saved from the sea of ignorance surrounding them spring towards the light of knowledge with a bright fervour of intelligence, rare to find in children of a

more privileged people. Nor does this light peter out in after years, for the young people show a steady stamina in their acquired habits of thought which fits them for the many high positions they hold on their own Island, or whenever they migrate to countries debarred from race prejudices.

If this exquisite but menaced Island could be given compulsory education (with proper nutrition) for every child; economic planning and control of industry, more power behind its experts, more money behind its welfare and Christian workers; and complete absence of race prejudice which would free the courage and self-respect of every dark child on the Island, there is no saying how great a contribution Jamaica might not give to our 'poor earth's crust'.

Man is a creative animal, but he cannot use his creative powers while he is being economically strangled or mentally darkened by the bitterest of all resentments—race hatred, caused by the silliest and most arrogant of all human delusions—race superiority!

The Island of Jamaica has all the ingredients of Paradise, but it has not yet been fully realized by man that not even the ingredients of Paradise can keep him out of Hell unless he is prepared to use them generously, not for his own selfish purposes, but for the good of mankind.

## THE ISLAND

They come to me and tread my soul  
They come to me and take their toll  
And ever am I brimming full.

But you digging the roads  
They rate you as a human bull  
O you burdened with loads  
They pass you by, they laugh along,  
They steal your ways, your words, your song.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

# WHOSE FUTURE IN THE CARIBBEAN ?

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LEE BAILEY

A NEW nation is rising in the Caribbean. Its territory will take up one hundred thousand miles of the West Indian Archipelago that curves from south of Florida to the Venezuelan coast and will include the mainland countries of British Guiana and British Honduras. It will not include those truly West Indian islands of the Bahamas, possibly because they are too near the United States coastline and Architect John Bull means no offence.

This nation will produce its own food and clothing and things to go to war with; only, it will not go to war for it believes in the plenty which goes with peace.

Sugar and oil, gold and cotton, bauxite and banana, tall timbers and great scapes of tourist scenery are among its largely undeveloped potentials. By conquest, cession, and settlement, its lush lustre was mounted to the British Crown during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Now two million Negroes, Jews, Indians, Chinese, Syrians, and some Englishmen live there, but mostly Negroes.

A considerable section of these two millions believes that peoples in at least two countries are watching for its emergence with more than ordinary interest. This section says that, first, there are the Britons, fighting to get back to their place in world commerce from which they were jolted by the war; that they need these islands both as major operational bases and sources of supplies in the New World. And that, on the other hand, the American Negro living out his harried life just a few hundred miles to the north has heard of its colourblind social standards, its centuries of established negro society, its promise of the freedom from jimcrowism for which his bound strains. This section of opinion says this nation has a future; but asks: Whose future?

Last September the Honourable Arthur Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, went to Montego Bay, Jamaica's famous tourist resort. There he sat down with fifty delegates and observers from Barbados, British Guiana, British Honduras, Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Trinidad, and the Windward Islands in a conference called to discuss measures for the closer union of the Caribbean colonies, or a Federated West Indians.

In his opening speech Creech Jones said: 'I have come at a very difficult time in the affairs of the United Kingdom. Our economic problems are acute, but we are determined to work our way through our present difficulties to a deeper consciousness of our obligations to the people which history by its legacy has given us.'

The 'legacy given us' came by way of the short-sighted exploitation of these colonies by absentee English landlords of the great sugar estates. For three hundred years, first with slaves, then with cheap native labour, their resident attorneys had worked the lands without fertilizers or anti-erosion protection. Three hundred years later their descendants are reaping the whirlwind legacy of impoverished soil, labour troubles, and hunger riots; and the once 'brightest gems of the Empire' are now what an investigating Royal Commission in 1938 described as 'slums of the Empire'.

In 1938 it took British soldiers and warships to quell hunger riots in the islands. West Indians openly declared that Britain had failed to bring them a decent way of life and demanded self government to solve their own problems. But in 1939 came the war, and rigid military control threw some of their leaders behind barbed wire inside internment camps.

After France had fallen, and Britain stood alone, Winston Churchill sailed out into the Atlantic. There he met the late President Roosevelt and agreed that all peoples were free to choose their own form of government. Jubilant West Indians redoubled their war effort and thought here was their Bill of Rights. But the footnote was still to come. Speaking in London afterwards, Mr. Churchill made it clear that what he had, he would hold. 'I have not become (Prime Minister) to preside at the liquidation of the British Empire,' he said.

So, as far as British Colonials were concerned, the Atlantic Charter had drifted overboard long before the world discovered that a Charter had never really been drafted.

When Britain's colonial policy came under fire from free peoples who were fighting against Nazi domination of other nations, new heart came to West Indians. They continued their internal political pressure for self government with the core centred around the eminent West Indian barrister and King's Counsel, Norman Manley, and his socialist Peoples' National Party.

Partial success was gained by the Indies when in 1944 Jamaica was granted a new constitution. It provided for semi-independence in a two chamber system modelled somewhat after the British parliament, with a House of Assembly elected by adult suffrage, a Legislative Council nominated by the Governor, both Houses directed by the policy-making Executive Council which has a Governor's majority, and finally the whole being subordinate to the veto power held by the English Governor.

Not much of self government that was, but it was a nucleus gained and agitation continued. Continued until Creech Jones went to Montego Bay and offered a Federated West Indian colony. He didn't say when self government would come.

Instead, he jeremiahed that unless his proposal was accepted delegates 'would hurl a blow of the greatest consequence to the West Indies' for decades to come. Delegates wondered at this sudden haste to sell them federation.

After Creech Jones had spoken, Delegate Alexander Bustamante, Jamaica's tough, shrewd Prime Minister, focused the thoughts of many West Indians into a few words: 'We feel that the time has come not just for Federation, but for self government. . . . Why is it that instead of offering that to which we are entitled, our right, freedom, you recommend federation with almost a threat?'

Highlighting Britain's erstwhile neglect of the islands, Bustamante said: 'The Imperial Government did not protect us in the past; how are they going to protect us now when they are in greater difficulties?'

Trinidad's fiery Albert Gomes, speaking after the Jamaican,

put it this way: 'What we desire is a self governing dominion, federated so far as the future is concerned.'

For nine days delegates argued, and when the conference ended, at Number Two on the Resolutions paper was a demand for full self government. Since the primary purpose of the conference was the discussion of federation proposals, they had in the first Resolution accepted federation in principle; but everyone knew this was only a courtesy placement and that Number Two was the real thing.

West Indians are very political, and after the conference had ended, in hilltop villages and portside cities of all the islands people began looking backwards to see where and why the British had eased the self-government wagon from the trail. And here is the thought sequence that built this section into thinking that two peoples are particularly interested—the British for a Federated Colony, the American Negro for a self governing Federation.

Except for British Guiana and Trinidad, agriculture is the main industry in all this territory. Despite the abuse suffered by the soil in the centuries of absentee ownership, its inherent richness has time and again been shown in the quick and easy response to fertilization and irrigation. Crop returns have been exceptionally high, and big combines operating in the islands, such as Tate and Lyle in sugar and the United Fruit Company in bananas, have more than justified their investments in the research field.

A decade ago Britain was ready to regard these colonies as exploded areas of revenue; but since near the war's end, she has signified her intention of pumping over fifteen million pounds sterling into the shrivelled veins to promote agricultural research, water supplies, schools. A Development Corporation will be launched in Britain to provide financial resources and other services which will be available for encouragement of private enterprise. A University of the West Indies will be built. Why all this? Is it a grand, if belated, effort on the part of the Mother Country to atone for her former neglect?

Some West Indians say, not altogether. They rather figure it this way.



Britain needs a firm toehold in the western hemisphere. Canada is a member of the Commonwealth, *but an independent member with a reserved right to leave or remain in the Empire*. Canada is a self-sufficient country and she has a destiny to work out and that destiny will not necessarily be parallel to that of the far-away British Isles.

The age of British trade dominance in the South American republics no longer shines in terms of wealthy oil and mining rights.

The only safe toehold for Great Britain is in these West Indian islands, and now the Indies were rather awkwardly baring the old sore of self government; and there would be no telling when the gold- and timber-rich Guiana would commence stirring in the same direction. This toehold would be firmer if Britain could make the islands satisfied under a colonial federation with better education, better food, better living conditions, and Whitehall developing and directing the flow of all this sugar, oil, gold, cotton, bauxite, banana, timber, and tourism. So, to cover the old sore, Creech Jones brought along his federation adhesive tape that they consider to be sadly lacking in the medicament of self government.

It took a war and a shortage of manpower to bring together two racially similar peoples who had for centuries occupied countries but short distances apart. Here and there there had been contacts, but not in such numbers as would have made West Indians and American Negroes interestedly aware of each other.

Both are of African stock that centuries ago was torn from its native old world continent to provide the cheap labour demanded by the growing new, and both now speak English as their mother tongue. Freedom from slavery came to both in the nineteenth century. They started the long climb back, meeting only occasionally in the persons of scattered emigrants to the United States, as sailors in Caribbean ports, or less so in American colleges.

But when World War II came along and American farmers left their tractors, the call came for thousands of West Indian farm workers. And this was the beginning of real association between the two peoples.

From this association both learnt a number of things. West Indians saw that while the United States was literally a new Jerusalem where it was commonplace for Negroes to own ice-boxes and radios and motor cars and college educations, on the other hand personal freedom was an unpleasant clutter of discriminating thou-shalt-nots. Americans learnt from their visitors that while the sunny islands did not exactly overflow with iceboxes and college educations, they could proudly boast that nobody had ever prevented them worshipping God from the front pew of any church.

Travelled American Negroes knew that just a few hours out of Miami there were lands in which the Negro cared not about a Mister Bilbo, and were used to being regarded as citizens with all the rights and privileges that the term implies. But to the untravelled millions this was something new.

So, all over the northern United States many small societies and clubs, which had been organized by West Indian immigrants for the advancement of coloured peoples, received a great influx of American members who in their financial and moral support recorded their new interest in the southern islands.

Since then, more and more numbers of holidaying American Negroes have been visiting the islands. They have been showing a remarkably great deal of interest in the political and economic position. At the Creech Jones' conference there were representatives of the American Negro press. Delegates from Negro societies in the United States attended the Caribbean Labour Congress called by labour unions throughout the West Indies prior to the Montego Bay conclave. Now what is the reason behind this new interest?

As a newspaperman, I recently interviewed an educated American Negro visitor to the West Indies. I asked him the reason for this new interest. He looked around at the blackened oildrums with their port of origin marked as: *Port of Spain, Trinidad*. He looked at the green wealth of bananas being slung aboard the steamer. He must have thought of gold in Guiana, of bauxite in Jamaica. He must have thought that here was a country where his people would not have to start from behind the scratch line; a country where his high education in the arts

and sciences could be used towards a definite goal for his people; where he would no longer be harried and confused.

He looked back at me. 'Brother,' he said, 'Marcus Garvey had his compass all wrong. This is where we should have been heading for, not old Africa.'

## THE LAST NEGRO

Green flaming wilderness!  
White jagged rocks of faith!

The last Negro moves across the world  
In his flesh Time's loins  
By his side Time's children.

Way back in 1940  
There was murder.

Way back  
Dawn bent its rose face  
Kissed a black animal  
Woman of the Negro race  
Lovely black animal.

Way back in 1930  
There was lynching  
He was dangling  
And survived his tree.

Spirit in physical  
Death is no end of faith!

The last Negro looks into the sun  
Into the gold flames  
Feeling the heat of stars  
And close is God  
In creation  
In destruction.  
For Time is God is Man  
And peace is chaos.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

# A MAN FROM JAMAICA

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CLAUDE THOMPSON

THAT day at high noon everyone coming back in from lunch saw the next person looking up at the sky and looked also. Right into the face of the midday glare they looked and there directly overhead was a circle around the sun:

Ah—It was an omen. Something was about to happen. Something—but what. They all went in shaking their heads and then they heard. . . .

‘The British are surrounded at Dunkirk!’

‘What . . . !’

. . . that then was the meaning of the ring around the sun, and now the news was coming. . . .

‘They are being evacuated. . . .’

‘They have lost everything . . .’

And there was a great hush over the land. This meant disaster. Liberty, freedom, justice . . . ! They were dead, and none dared to hope and through succeeding days the news became worse.

‘The French have decided not to defend Paris!’

‘The French have retreated outside Paris where they will make a final stand.’

Then. . . .

‘The French have capitulated!!!’

This was the end. Everyone knew it was the end. Men whispered in the shade—men looked at the sun—at the goodly earth over which a blight was creeping—a foul miasma that would soon blot out the light of day and none dared to hope in the months that followed.

None save . . .

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The señor Pedro Angello D’aquilla Y Mendoza sits on his piazza in Kingston high above the traffic of the street and dreams in the evening sun. Nothing moves him—nothing. Not the clanging of the trams—not the sound of the world falling

to pieces around his ears. He is like a God and he sits in the sun high above the clamour of the people.

You say to him . . .

'But a hundred million people die, señor.'

He says . . .

'What of it? It is destiny. What a beautiful aroma this cigar has, amigo?'

You are enraged. . . .

'But señor. Are you a madman. . . .'

He smiles. . . .

'No, amigo. A wise one I hope.'

And still you persist. . . .

'But Liberty. . . .'

'Liberty, amigo,' he replies, 'Liberty never dies—never.'

It is as if a change has come over him. He is no longer an old man sitting in the evening sun—a weak old man. He sits up and he whispers like a man telling his beads. . . .

'Liberty—por la Libertad.'

. . . and then he is turning towards you and he is talking and the words come fast. . . .

'It is destiny—that men should suffer and die; even you and I, amigo. It is thus we find ourselves—a man—a people. Here on the outskirts of the ripple we feel only the dread of a thing, that has not come to us literally as yet, ten times as much as the thing itself. But, if the innocents of Bethlehem cry out, know you that out of this travail to a better day shall come—a man—an idea. Libertad—it cannot die. I hear, amigo, that it is with us this canker of the heart—cowardice, greed, treachery, and that disloyalty that is called the fifth column. I sit here in the sun and to you and to the others I do not appear to hear or care. I do not appear to hear or know what is happening. I hear that in America of the south where my fathers came from there is great evidence of the iron tyranny that has all Europe in its grip. I hear and I am not moved! I Pedro Angello D'aquilla Y Mendoza! Ha—! You do not know. I am dreaming of another day—of another tyranny. I am thinking that in another day the seemingly lost cause of the rights of man were won because of a single word—Libertad. I am thinking of one man and an idea setting out

with two hundred men to conquer a continent—to found five great republics. I am thinking of a man who walked these very streets here in Kingston dreaming of the freedom of all men—of their right to live. Dreaming for a year; dreaming and writing to men of like thoughts and then setting out to hurl the yoke of a tyrant from the neck of a people. You do not know of this man amigo? You have never heard of him so your heart is faint because the odds are great. You do not know that perhaps over the very spots on which you tread passed the feet of so great a man. Over there—over that muddy hole passed the idea of Liberty—only an idea and yet it saved a continent. It gave to South America the great countries that you know as Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Ah—Bolivia! Sacred to the name of the Great Liberator—Simon Bolivar.

‘But I should tell you, amigo. I should quiet you my little one groping in the dark and so afraid to live—so afraid to die. I shall show you that there are no lost causes if only a man believes. I shall show you that even the weak in body can, for the love of the abstract truths of justice and freedom, do the deeds of bloodthirsty fighting men. I shall tell you of my grandmother—May God rest her sainted soul—who killed a man that liberty might come to her people. I see her frail hands and I wonder. She, who could not kill a chicken for the table, killed a man!

‘It is the year 1815. There is war in Europe and here on this side of the world an idea had begun to permeate men’s brains. Men had begun to think that it was a good thing that men should be free—should be allowed to carve their own destiny, and already they had put their ideas to the test and had lost, so it seemed, *forever*. Simon Bolivar the champion of this lost cause is defeated. It is treachery again. How do you call it to-day—the fifth column? His ragged pescardores are scattered and in the minds of men is only the memory of ragged banners, blood-stained battle-fields and brave barefooted ragged men standing in the sun against white wall, the muffled roll of drums, and one last defiant shout—

“Viva La Libertad. . . .” and then the crash of muskets and brown bodies twitching in the dust. It is defeat. There are no

banners left to fight the House of Castile. Bolivar will soon be caught. But no—Word comes—Word goes. Bolivar is free.

"They who know how to do it have got him away and those who have got him away know what it means. . . .

"The muffled drums and then—"Fire".

"There are dead men in the dust again but Bolivar is free. He will come again. Let Morillo and Morales do their worst. Bolivar will come again and meanwhile it is 1815 and Bolivar is here in Jamaica. He is at the house of my grandfather after whom I am named Pedro Angello D'Avuilla Y Mendoza. He writes and he reads. He sends out that famous letter to the world known as "The Jamaica Letter" in which he lays down the principles of right rule, and men come and go by night for a whole year; waiting—waiting for the appropriate time.

"There are no lights in Kingston's streets. It is a fine place for desperate men, on desperate missions; who slip in under cover of dark from a ship anchored in the stream, to dream of liberty—to talk of liberty—to keep ever alight in their breasts its tiny flame.—

" "I have got the arms, señor."

" "Bueno."

" "When do we march, O Liberator?"

" "Not yet, amigo. Not yet. No one must know. You must get them over to Santa . . . to the good Hernandez. He must hide them and then soon—soon we will come."

"And so he held them. Husbanding them for the time when one man and an idea should become two hundred men and an idea and finally a continent with an idea. An idea that would win the battles of Boyaca and Carabobo; that would make them climb the terrible cordilleras of the Andes; that would make Cordoba jump from his horse and run it through and then shout . . .

" "Gentlemen, I have nothing with which I can retreat."

"Yes, amigo. Bolivar is at the house of my grandfather, and my grandmother, Maria Angella Therese Y Mendoza—God rest her soul—she of the frail hands who cannot kill a chicken for the pot, runs the house and does not know that here in her house eating at her table is the Great Bolivar. She sits on the porch and bemoans the fact that none of her sons are as yet

old enough for the revolution and my grandfather looks at her and mumbles uneasily in his beard.

“Silence woman. Even the walls have ears. Here you are happy. Dream not of your unhappy land.”

‘And my grandmother says—

“You—Pedro Angello D’Aquilla Y Mendoza! You—a coward!” and covering her face with her hands she flees into the house. My grandfather mumbles in his beard to the man at his side—“It is a flame. It never dies. Liberty for the people—Libertad! Next month all will be ready. To-night the messenger comes. Till then the walls have ears, O Liberator.”

‘It is then that my grandmother comes out and she hears—  
“O Liberator.”

‘She stares at the faces of her husband and the lean, high-browed, bearded face of their guest and she knows—

“You! The Liberator . . .”

‘She grasps his hand, while the tears run down her cheeks, and kisses it and then she hurls herself into the arms of her husband, my grandfather. . . .

“Ah Pedro mio! How can you ever forgive me?”

‘Those are great days then. In a month they strike a blow for liberty, and then it is a week—only a week; and men are coming and men are going and the watchword is—

“Mañana.”

‘The arms are being gathered. The ragged starving people who live always with death are waiting to leap to life again—waiting for a man to come from Jamaica; then it happens. . . .

‘It is one of those nights when the stars are like a thousand gems in the firmament. The wind is being wafted gently over the land from the hills and the cries of a “wake” come plaintively to the ear.

‘To-night will come the last messenger and then . . . The Liberator and my grandfather are closeted together. They talk in whispers in the dark of the night. They are men of destiny.

‘My grandmother is in her room. She cannot sleep. She says her beads over and over again. She goes to her window and there she gazes at the majesty of the stars—she gazes at God who is like a great mountain from which a cool breeze comes and she is calmed. There is the smell of Jasmine in the wind



from under the Poincianna tree, where the red blooms cover the ground by day like a crimson sheet; from the far end of the garden a cricket chirps.

'She is about to turn back to bed when . . . What is that shadow at the end of the house—on the roof above the window that opens into the room that is next to the one in which the men are sitting! The figure moves! It is a man! He is coming down towards the window! He must be. . . .

'In a flash it is clear. It is an assassin. Only an assassin would want to get into that room that way. She must warn the men. No—there is no time. She must do something. She grabs up a shawl and the stiletto that her husband keeps in the back of the chest of drawers in their room and she is out. On bare feet she steals silently down the corridor and there by the door she waits. The door is opening—a figure is coming through it—she leaps—She who could not kill a chicken leaps and sticks a stiletto into a man!

'The noise brings the men out of the room. They are aghast. My grandfather gasps—

' "Maria Therese. . . . You. . . ."

'—and all she can do is sob—

' "We are betrayed. . . ."

'—and the men looked on amazed. All my grandfather can do is gasp, and then the Liberator speaks.—

' "To-morrow I go to Haiti, to the asylum offered by the President Petion. I shall wait yet a little more and then I shall go forward never to return."

'—and through it all my grandmother is crying.—

' "We are betrayed."

' "No, no, Señora. We have been saved by your bravery." '

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There is silence. Then señor Pedro Angello D'Aquilla Y Mendoza is gazing across the street, and then he speaks again:

'That is why I do not fear these times. I know what men embattled can do. I know that only against great odds men live. I know that nothing is too hard for men who dream of liberty. I hurl in the face of defeat an idea. I give you a word—a word to conjure with—liberty—and I give you life.'

There is silence. For a space you do not know where you

A MAN FROM JAMAICA

are, and then you feel the sun on your hands—can hear the rumble of the traffic in the street below your feet—can hear the newsboys crying out in the evening sun. What is that that they are crying. . . .

‘Evening news! Evening news!’

‘Guerrilla bands operating in Yugoslavia.’

Pedro Angello D’Aquila Y Mendoza turns his bright eyes from the street and looks at you. In them is a flame. He looks at you with a look that is a challenge—so high, so wide, so bold, and he says—

‘Liberty—Por La Libertad.’

## NEW CONSTITUTION 1945

Now we are tenants at will no longer.  
There’s more room; more right of way  
In the land, still not our own,  
In the land for us unknown:  
And our children; their’s to be Home  
for to-morrow. Still unpurchased.

Now we turn tenants at will no longer.  
Spiritual heirs of God. Our spirits stronger.  
Let’s now look to inheritance  
Of our earth. With claim made stronger  
By our achievements, our natural dignity.

This land will speak with voices  
Of destiny. Voices from victory  
Of ownership in proud estate.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

# MONDAY MAWNIN'

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CLAUDE THOMPSON

WHY should one wake up on a Monday mawnin'? It is an effort to grasp the very consciousness of life and the thought of the six days without labour stretching before a jobless man.

'Lawd Jesus— Lawd Jesus—'

There is no work and consequently no food or money in the house and Liza Ann is always grumblin'; Liza Ann is always talking of other men.

'You can't care woman, yuh is a good-fi-nothin' mampala man.'

There she commenced now. The light of day was hardly here and she had started to lay around with her tongue.

'Mek yuh no get up go look wuk.'

All last week he had looked for work—all last week he had stood in a long line waiting and asking for work; not last week only, but for weeks before, and now—

'Woman, shut yuh dam' mout',' he roared.

Every Monday mawnin' she seemed bent on driving him to work. She seemed to think that if she did not stick at him he would never look for work! All his life he had worked. If he couldn't get work, what was he to do? There she went again.

'You better gwan. If a tea you a look for, mi no ha none.'

He pulled a washed-out khaki shirt over the other things he had slept in and then a patched and shrunken pair of pants. He stuck his feet into a dusty lopsided pair of shoes and all the while her tongue was belabouring him. She had forgotten how much different things had been when he had been working and she had got his money every Friday night. She was saying as he washed his face with the water poured from a mug into his hands as he hung over a window—

'Ah not standing this much longer. Ah gwine get another man.'

He washed his face and tightened his belt. Lord knows he

couldn't stand it. He was going to look for work and he was not coming back. He would come back only for his clothes, when he thought she was not in the house and then he'd leave. She could go to hell if she cared then. He put on his cap and made for the door. She was still talking.

'Don't come back without wuk.'

He felt an insane desire to hit her down, but he restrained himself. She did not know it, but this was the end. He could take all she had and more. He was about to start a new week and a new life.

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The line of unkempt men stretched round the corner near the Employment Bureau and waited and waited. The police, in shirt sleeves and with batons, rode herd over them. The men grumbled and fumed and still the line did not become shorter. Instead it grew longer. It never seemed to move and meanwhile the sun rose higher and higher in the heavens and beat on them.

Someone 'scuffled' a discarded cigarette butt from the dry gutter, begged a light from a passer-by, and after a whiff, passed it round to his set of friends. Other men looked on with greedy longing eyes until one, emboldened by desire, stopped another passer-by and begged and got a cigarette, a whole clean cigarette, not a butt discarded in the gutter.

'Thank you, boss. Ah know you was a good man. Thank you, boss.'

They all looked approvingly at a man who could give away something for nothing.

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He had been standing there hopelessly all morning. Now imperceptibly hope quickened in him. It was not so bad a world after all. Perhaps someone will understand and give him work—work for the labour he wants to give. Perhaps he would get a job.

The sun was almost overhead—merciless and pitiless. He broke the line. A policeman came up, saying gruffly: 'Kip the line! Kip the line!'

He walked directly across the street and stood beneath the shade of the mango tree that overhung the sidewalk on that side. A mango dropped almost at his feet. He grabbed it before anyone else could and bit into it, after wiping it on his pants. First, he ate the skin, then he bit the body of it, and soon there was only the seed. He sucked it as white as the side of the house across the street, then he threw it into the gutter and looked longingly up at the tree in the hope that another mango would drop. They were all green as far as he could see. There might be ripe ones higher up but he could not see them. He wiped his mouth with the inside of his cap and hauled it back on his head.

The gnawing pain he had felt in his stomach had ceased a little. He looked through the railings of the home in which the mango tree stood and saw a grey-haired lady digging one of the flower beds. He opened his mouth to ask her for some mangoes, and found himself saying: 'Please may ah have ah drink at your pipe, ma'am.'

He was a fool. He didn't want water. He wanted mangoes—he wanted something to eat. He was afraid that if he asked for other than water she might abuse him and run him away. Many of these better-off people did. They all said: 'Why don't you work? You are too damned lazy.'

The grey-haired lady beckoned him in. He knelt by the pipe and drank slowly in his cupped hands. He felt slightly giddy. He held on to the pipe. When he opened his eyes the lady was staring at him queerly. He bestirred himself immediately and got to his feet as briskly as he could.

'Thank you, ma'am,' he said, cap in hand. The grey-haired lady was smiling now. She said: 'Would you like something to eat?'

'Yes please, ma'am.'

'Come this way.'

In the kitchen she gave him bread and meat, and he asked for paper to wrap them up. She said: 'Family, eh?' and she gave him more meat and in addition a large loaf of bread, some sugar, and a sixpence.

He did not know how to thank her. He just kept saying: 'Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am,' as he backed out

through the sidegate into the lane on the other side from the street by which he entered.

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The 'yard' was usually deserted at that hour. The other occupants were either working or seeking work. He supposed he was a fool but he had decided he would not go away again. Perhaps a woman should grumble if things were hard. He decided he'd eat some of the meat and leave the rest and go out to look for work again. He'd get work to-day—he must get work to-day. He approached his room and suddenly he heard voices. With a sudden start he realized that it was Liza Ann and a man's. Liza Ann was saying: 'Don't mind 'bout Amos. If all these months him don't know what 'appenin' him won't know again. Ah run him out every mornin'. He don't dare touch me ah night.'

'Cho! Who day worry 'bout Amos?'

He stood rooted to the spot. He had not expected anything quite like this. All these years he had, even before they lived together, never heard of Liza Ann being a two-timer.

Everything began to take on a new light. Her eagerness to get him out of the 'house' in the mornings, that new dress she said the Mrs. — for whom she worked had given her; the long nights when she was always sick of something, or she had picked a quarrel before going to bed, about money, so that he didn't even want to see her—much less touch her; all these he now understood. He felt dizzy. No need to listen to the words they were using—the sounds of talking were enough. 'Dat fool Amos.'

The bread and meat and sugar dropped from his hands, the sound aroused him and then as if the diversion created by these inanimate objects was the signal that had been needed, the blood came rushing to his head and all the world—the dirty shacks, the filthy yard, swam before his vision.

The cutlass. That was the thing. On Sunday, having nothing to do, he had put a good edge on it. It was in the kitchen, behind the door. What he wanted it for he did not know. What was he going to do with it?

'Lawd Jesus, Lawd Jesus'—

Someone was coming through the gate. It was Mis' Secreta.

'Hi mas' Amos! yuh back early—yuh no hear me, mas' Amos?—Wheh you a run go with the cutlass? Jesus Christ, Mas' Amos—Mas' Amos! Murder! Murder!'

His arm was working up and down. It was a long time since he had not had any work, but to-day he had work to do. Swing—chop! swing—chop. Perhaps one could not blame a woman for what she had done if her man couldn't 'mind' her, but—swing,—chop! swing—chop!

Now he must go and find Sergeant Major Jones. What the hell was the crowd doing in the yard?

'Oonoo move out a me way.'

'Jesus God! Him gwine kill me!'

'Murder!'

'Gi' the man way—yuh no see him mad?'

Everywhere people are rushing away from the path. Gates are slammed and people are staring over the tops of them. Everyone runs, but a little child that toddles up to him and crows . . . 'Man, man'. He pats the little head. A screaming woman comes tearing at him.

'Yuh dam' murderer! Leave me pickney alone!'

She tears the child away, and what is this she is saying to the crowd—'Lick dung the man . . .'

The crowd is roaring. A brick hits him in the side. He staggers. Another and another brick. He does not care. He has starved. He has suffered. All he had wanted was work. Work—no matter what kind of work, so that he could keep his 'house' and his woman. He hadn't been able to get work. He hadn't been able to keep his woman.

A brick hit him on the head. He went down. The crowd was closing in. Blood was trickling into his eyes. He made a desperate effort and got to his feet, dashing the blood from his eyes with his free hand. He must see Sergeant Major Jones—he must see Sergeant Major Jones. He broke into a run. Behind him the crowd howled and hands grasped at his shirt. He whirled in a frenzy and the mob scuttled for safety and then he was running again.

'Him run. . . '

The crowd was at his heels. Where was Sergeant Major

Jones? Ah—there was Sergeant Major Jones! He was staring at him in a funny manner and patting him on the shoulder. 'Yes . . . yes. . . . Nice sharp machette you hab' Amos. Mek ah see it.'

He handed Sergeant Major Jones the machette. Suddenly he could bear it no longer. He buried his head on the Sergeant Major's shoulder and began to sob. . . . 'Lawd Jesus! Lawd Jesus!

The Sergeant Major had his arms around him and was soothing him. . . .

'Dere—Dere, Amos! Ah hab fi 'res you, bwoy. Ah hab fi' res you. . . . If yuh wan' talk yuh can talk, but anything yuh say will be taken as evidence against yuh'—What was he saying now? 'Constable Brown! Constable Brown! Where is that dam' fool Constable? Leaving me here to be murdered on a Monday mawning! God hear me, ah gwine 'port him. Dat yuh, Corporal?'

'Yes, Major.'

'Tek dung a statement. Nice ting. Fust ting on a Monday mawnin'. Murder! Murder! An' dat dam fool constable leaving me here alone to be murdered! Murdered on a Monday mawnin'. Suppose it was a ganja man? Ah don't mind dying on any other day but not on a Monday mawnin'. You just start the week and then jus' fi dead so! Hell of a ting yuh do, Amos—commit murder on a Monday mawnin'.'

'Yes, Major.'

'And fi a dam fool woman, Jesus Christ! Mek oono man so fool? Look how much ooman dey! Yuh kill her to?'

'Yes, Major.'

'Yuh don't so dam fool then. Useless heng and left the ooman fi enjoy herself. Corp'ral, get Central and den tek a statement. Sid dung, Amos. Nice work on a Monday mawnin'. Get dem, Corp'ral? Gi mi de phone. . . . Central Police Station. Sergeant Major Jones of Rashford Town Police Station reporting an' saluting at the same time, sar. Dere has been a murder committed, sar. Murdah on a Monday mawnin', sar. I arrested the accused myself, sar. What's dat, sar? Thank yuh, sar. Very good, sar. I am expec-in' yuh, sar. Good-bye, sar. . . .



'Thank God dat over. Yuh tek the statement, Corp'ral. . . . Amos, ah ha fi lock yuh up, but anythin' yuh want, jus' ask mi . . . what dat, Corp'ral? Mi shut. . . . Lawd God! Look how yuh blood me up, Amos. . . . Yuh see how yuh nasty up mi shut. . . . A clean shut ah put on dis Monday mawnin'. Whey Ah gwine tell mi wife? Dis only Monday mawnin'. . . . Come on, yuh dam fool. . . . Why yuh didn't kill the ooman on Wednesday mawnin'. . . . Ah hope you heng, committing murder on a Monday mawnin'. No sensible man would do a ting like dat. Stop. . . . Jesus Christ. . . . Corp'ral. . . . De prisoner is of an unsound mind. . . . Jesus Christ. . . .! Lock him up, Corp'ral . . . lock him up!'

## ME AN' MY GAL

*Dialect Poem, 1933*

Me bus into the city into dis ya town  
 Me an' me bag me shut pan an' me gal so brown  
 Lis'en ya wife here we mus' have we chile  
 In a dis ya gran' place in a dis ya town.  
 All the city shinin' wid de 'lectric light.  
 All de white man magic mek day from night.  
 Lawd O! Lawd me Gad yuh great  
 All men dem a trabil here fus rate.  
 Luk yah 'usband watch black gal a w'ine  
 In silks an' gran' hats an' shoes so fine  
 Watch dem w'ine dem backside walking  
 Down de street, sih yah wha' talking  
 Dem a put pon whe?

Lawd O siyah Gad de groun it burn me foot  
 De road dem is lebel but dem hot me foot.  
 Me a walk thru city an' me ha' fe dance  
 Dis blinkin' hot road mek me more dan prance.  
 Motor car come shinin' at mos' fas' rate  
 Lick me 'gainst brickwall, almost bruk me pate.  
 Hell yah! white man in a four foot sintin'  
 Man shut in a box say 'im a sing.

POEMS

See yah wife dis yah whurl is great  
Me wi stay yah, suh, wait me fate.  
Policeman come, move on son of a bitch.  
Permanent! man clap me 'cross wi' switch.  
Put me in 'aspital nu'ss dem so kine  
See lot 'lectric t'ings, see false teeth false eye.

Walking do'n broad street wid criss-cross light  
Glass shop windah gi'us lovely sight.  
Naygur man in bow tie  
In shoes an' socks  
Naygur hooman glide by  
With polish locks.

A wait yah, Jesus, a whe she, raise dat head  
A naygur hair stay so pon' 'ar head?  
See ya wife hurry up wi' dah chile  
Losing edication all dis while  
Gwine to mek 'im lawyah  
Gwine to mek 'im talk suh  
Gwine to mek 'im handle  
De four wheel ting,  
Gwine to mek 'im larned  
Gwine mek 'im fool man  
Gwine to mek 'im shine suh before gal.

Some'n come like t'undah a wipe me off me foot.  
Gran t'ing pon 'undred foot dem call train.  
Go do'n tunnel come up t'other side, see 'im!  
Oh mek me under'tan' dem ting wi' disyah brain.  
Dem 'av' patch wuk wire cross ole city  
Lady miles away says: 'Can't come what a pity!'  
Yuh want see man a wheel stick in disyah town.  
Wan'na see shim-sham, black gal shim-sham.  
Wan'na see black boys dress's up in dem tam.  
See two storey mam-ma big like jam.

De fus day me come yah me go in a churh  
The churh gran' so till me nebbah see none such.

POEMS

De parson an' de angels dress in parrot clothes  
Tarapple face man an' 'ooman, sing pray an' pose  
White man come, move me out mah seat,  
Say me dear blackmam, use yuh feet.  
See from street parson gnash 'im teeth  
One more subscriber out a street.

See yuh wife 'urly up ya quick  
Gwin' to edicate 'im  
Gwin' to mek 'im gran.  
Gwin' to mek 'im  
Lawd an' mastah  
In disyah lan'.  
Wan'na see de court house  
Wan'na see fight  
Wan'na see Nay gur  
Stan' fe 'im right.  
Tidder day me look on man  
Man lick me wid a brick  
Saw de Lawd and Abra'am  
An' Moses wid a brick.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

THE NIGHT

The night is naked  
And it wears no clothes  
No shadow moonlight  
To distort the night  
The night is naked  
And it wears no clothes.

Black is the night's hair  
Black is the night's face  
No moon  
No stars  
The night is naked  
And it wears no stars.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

# THE AWFUL RED TIME

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VICTOR REID

*Note.*—In the south coast parish of St. Elizabeth, in the island of Jamaica, British West Indies, there is a great savannah known as the Pedro Plains on which live eight thousand natives. Of these, a goodly portion are descendants of Spanish and Portuguese sailors, shipwrecked off Great Pedro Bluff centuries ago. Once, in the days of the aboriginal Arawak Indians and their Spanish overlords, the Pedro was a fertile savannah of fat grasses and fields of waving cane. But unplanned cultivation has left its toll of eroded, dusty earth. When there is rain, the earth is a beautiful red mould. But when the dry season comes, then this red mould turns to red dust. Then it is the Awful Red Time.—V. S. R.

**E**ACH year, the Awful Red Time comes around to the Great Pedro Plains of St. Elizabeth. There is no rain. Moisture leaves the earth. Water in the storage tanks sink lower and lower. Each day a burnished face of sun swings through a sky in which there is no cloud, lapping up all wetness from the land with its myriad yellow tongues.

A time comes when there is no water or grass at all. Red clouds of dust flee before the cruel feet of a marching east wind, and soon, men and animals, growing things are covered with this crimson pall, a land in mourning. This is the Awful Red Time.

Then men, women, and even children must trudge the dusty roads bearing pans upon their heads in a desperate seeking for water. Gaunt cattle roam the undulating plain, licking at the beds of dried-up ponds. Nobody washes body or clothing; what water is found is preserved for drinking. There is little food. Vegetables shrivel and become unfit for eating. Burnt and listless tobacco plants bow before the wind. And since it is from tobacco sales that they get their spending money there is no money to buy imported flour and salted Halifax cod. And so comes the awful time.

After a while some can stand it no longer. Whole families shoulder their ragged bundles and drift through the mountain

passes leading away from the unfriendly land. Through the months to come, many of the island's fourteen parishes will see their wandering figures and say pityingly: 'Poor Pedro people.'

But perhaps one morning in some distant parish someone will say: 'I hear there has been rain in St. Elizabeth!'

And, if there are Pedro people within hearing, confidently wager your bottom shilling that soon they will be on their way home.

For a miracle happens when it rains on the Pedro Plains.

The awful red dust disappears; the air is clean and cool again; green grass breaks through the surface of the earth; children laugh and play; the salmon-pink houses on the rolling countryside are like homes in a Japanese garden.

Recently, with a cameraman, I went to get a record of this drought-stricken land. All the way down from Kingston, Jamaica's capital city, we had heard of the Red Time. But on the night we reached the upper shelf of the savannah, rain fell. And so, at Portsea, one thousand eight hundred feet up the Santa Cruz mountains (the rugged backbone of St. Elizabeth), we saw the miracle which rains bring to the Pedro soil.

We started the tour at Portsea, and descended through Brown's Hall, Ridge, Tophill, Southfield, Flagaman, to the bottom plains near sea-level. Down here no rain had fallen. The miracle had not happened.

Down here the people are dirty and unkempt. In the deep, salt-streaked bottoms the homes are rude shelters of thatch and sticks thrown together anyhow. Down here, children go to school only when the teacher can promise lunch. Lunch is sugar and water mixed in a bottle, with a few grains of parched corn to chew on. The children do not complain. Often there is nothing.

This drought does strange things to humans.

Let me tell it starkly.

It sends a family of fourteen into mango trees to dine on unripe fruits, then sends them staggering across the salt flats with dysentery knotting their bowels. Ten of this family are completely naked; the others, being older, wear rags about their waists.

It makes a man spend two shillings and sevenpence on straw and thread, makes his daughter work three days manufacturing a dozen *jippi-jappa* (native straw) hats, makes him walk all night to the market where he sells them for four shillings and sixpence. His gross profit has been one shilling and elevenpence.

The drought brings a peculiar pattern of living to the people of the Pedro. During the Awful Time there is neither money or food, and in ordinary circumstances they should starve; but the shopkeepers, themselves only little better off, take over from here.

Week after week, for the six or more dry months, these gallant commercials eke out their stocks on credit to the hungry people.

The drought does strange things to man's endurance. It sends a man and his family walking a hundred and thirty miles to the other end of the island in search of work. And when he gets none he walks back home, hungry nearly all the way.

There are no great sugar estates (or other industries) in the area to offer work to the eight thousand poor. They must stir the earth and plant their crops of tobacco, corn, vegetables, and pray that it will rain. If it doesn't, they get the Awful Time.

But, of course, being a coastal parish there is the fishing. Not so good this fishing. You see, they must push out in their frail canoes from a lee shore into open water, then struggle south for ten miles until they come to the shallows known as High Rock. Here they cast their bamboo fish-pots and wait on fisherman's luck. But looming sheer out the sea is the massive solidity of Great Pedro Bluff, the great granite wall of the south. Nobody knows how many lives have been lost in these waters of dangerous currents, but too often, the fisherman never gets back.

We talked with the Anglican pastor of the Plains. He said that the tank at the school was now empty and that the supply of parched corn was nearly run out and he guessed he would have to close the place. He told of poor families: of fathers who must watch their children die of slow starvation; he spoke with half-pity, half-pride, of the blind courage of these people which

makes them hang on to their homesteads in a land unfit for habitation. We heard that they could hardly pay taxes, but in their proud spirit have refused to ask for government abatement.

We heard how many peasant farmers were selling their stocks at half price, because a starving animal is not nice to look at. They sell it to people who can provide feed and water. What little water these peasants can purchase at a farthing per two tins is just enough for their families. Nobody knows when it will rain again.

For in the spring and summer the average rainfall was .88 inch per month. They wonder what it will be in dryer autumn.

We talked with many Pedro people and they asked if us in the wet outside world had allowed the mud to clog our eyes to human suffering. They said that the earth was rich, that all it needed was water, and that water could be piped in from the many streams which just circle the edge of the plains. They say that even a few wells for irrigation would make the Pedro bloom again as in long forgotten days.

They are sick of trekking day after day, many, many miles to almost dried tanks where they must scrape water from the muddy bottoms to keep body and soul together. They say their children should go to school, not be kept at home to carry water-pans. They call their children Citizens of the Future, and point at their emaciated bodies and ask if this is the future?

They say they are entitled to something other than green mangoes, and that early ageing from malnutrition should not be their lot.

They further say that half their lives should not be spent in wondering how it felt to be decently clothed, or to have just had a full meal. They say with sufficient piping, or wells, the miracle would not be dependent on rain.

They say their pride as men of God's Image is being lost in the Awful Red Time.

# HALF A FORK

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W. G. OGILVIE

THEIR husbands' growing wealth had raised Mrs. Pratt and Mrs. Penon to some prominence in their tiny village. Both men were now elders in the church; the wives were on several committees; and by this time held positions as teachers in the Sunday school. Their dresses, tailored by capable seamstresses in the city, were the sorrow and envy of less fortunate ladies. Furthermore, each could afford two servants, a luxury hitherto undreamed-of in that rustic backwater. On Sundays it was a delight anticipating heaven, to wait until all the congregation were seated, then in slow and stately progress, clad in gleaming silk, or glistening satin, with many bangles jingling on smooth black arms, and shoes squeaking loudly, to march from the rear, down the long aisle, straight to their seats under the pulpit. But 'pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall'.

One afternoon Hezekiah Pratt on his return home found all the place excited. Susan had scrubbed clean some old silver forks and spoons, and now was admiring and comparing them with something in the newspaper.

'What is it?' he asked.

The woman, approaching, kissed him. 'We are rich for life, now; see it here!'

She thrust the paper into his hand. The item was brief. It stated simply that the last known direct heir to the Bradalvy estates had died, so search was being made for any other branches of the family. Anyone possessing proofs to show connection with the family should communicate with Messrs. Pikkem, Grabbet, and Leevenaut, solicitors of 25 Buick Street, London, E.C. 5, directly; or through their agent, Mr. G. Shavewell, of 14 Elaine Avenue, Kingston, Ja., B.W.I.

'But this don't mean a thing,' he objected. 'This is for white people.'

'All right, you leave it to me. I bet you I do something about the matter,' she retorted.



Susan was somewhat premature. Others beside herself possessed relics of the Bradalvy family, and soon the entire district was in turmoil over the question of who should receive the 'Buldawby' estate.

Saturday evening Mrs. Pratt was out doing her week's shopping, when she heard her name called. On her turning, Muriel Turner was seen beckoning. So she went over to where a small knot of women were excitedly arguing.

'Susie, is it true say you have some Buldawby silver 'poon and forks?' asked Miss Turner.

'Yes. I have six spoons and three forks, and one knife. The knife has worn down, so that almost no blade is left.' Susan replied.

A sigh of wonder greeted this announcement. For some moments silence held; then a voice remarked, 'Marian here say that she have two forks, two spoons, and one big dish.'

'Tcho!' Mrs. Pratt's voice held scorn. 'What kind of dish?'

'China dish,' spoke Marian truculently.

Again Mrs. Pratt sniffed, 'Is who hear say that China dish count? The paper did say silver or gold things, I am certain. And nobody here don't have no gold tings.'

'Well, me lady, make me tell you,' retorted Miss Dudwidge, 'This is not going to go like me fowl that you husband did murder one time. I know say I have the china dish, one big china dish, that have four marks on it. I work with white people and never see no dish like me own. It have channel along the bottom for gravy to run into and a deep part to catch the grease; and what is more, it have four Buldawby marks on it.'

Conversation became general, and even after Susan's departure, the question continued in hot debate. It was not as simple of solution as one would at first believe.

First thing to decide was: could one go by relative values? How many forks or spoons was one big dish worth? But there was a hitch if one went by intrinsic values; for some forks, and spoons, being worn, would count for less than other; and the consensus of opinion was that any spoon, whether teaspoon or tablespoon, any fork, with or without tines entire, once it had the Buldawby mark, should count equal with its more favoured

and less battered brethren. In that case, then, it was impossible to assess the big dish from a point of monetary value; moreover, no one knew sufficient of such matters to be the assessor.

Someone suggested that they count according to the number of Buldawby marks on each item; but Swashi Brown pointed out the drawback of this system. 'If,' said he, 'you are goin' to count that way, then remember say Susan's knife has two marks, one on each side; it will count as two.'

But a murmur of dissent met this statement, and Slim stated, 'But you must consider, Swashi, when you go to eat, you say knife-and-fork. You count them as a pair, like wife and husband. You don't consider them separate. Now, if Marian did have a plate instead of a dish, I would say count it as one, no matter how much Buldawby brand it might have. But whereas a man must have knife and fork and plate, he don't must have dish; so since the dish is extra, count it extra.'

To which dictum Swashi would not agree: 'Ah! Now you is talkin! Since it is extra, it is not necessary, and what is not necessary, we can do without. Since we can do without it, we don't have to buy it, therefore it ought to count for less. So I say count the big dish as one. Wait, Slim; answer me this question. A man can't do without food?'

'No?' vigorously answered his opponent.

'He almost can't do without clothes?' continued Swashi.

'Surely not!' Slim returned.

'Don't you agree that some people live without having any house?' Swashi persisted. Slim nodded assent.

Thereupon Swashi demanded triumphantly: 'Then tell me which is cheapest, and which is dearest: food, clothes, or house?'

The delighted crowd gave answer, 'Food is cheapest; house is dearest.'

'Slim, don't bother try. You lose,' a man advised.

The affair was compromised by making the big dish count for two Buldawby brands. However, the matter was not allowed to rest there.

Susan's sister, having only two spoons, handed them over to her on the understanding that the giver would share in the

Bradalvy estate. When two cousins followed suit, the news got out, and Marian's faction likewise commenced contributing odd pieces of silver. But however much the former might have, yet the fact that her opponent had a piece of crockery galled her soul. Whenever rival factions met to discuss the progress of their champions, Miss Dudwidge's supporters always ended up with the statement, 'But we got deh dish!'

The business became so humiliating that Jemima Pawn, having snatched an ancient willow pattern basin from her mother's store of things, offered it to Susan; but the latter refused, pointing out that when the affair was brought up for final settlement, the imposture would be exposed.

Finally, a deadlock was reached, with Susan leading by two spoons and a fork, but still no dish; when Mass Sam, a distant relative, called one morning: 'Morning, Mississ Pratt; I bring something for you.'

The parcel he handed her was neatly wrapped up in several sheets of newspaper. As Susan unwrapped fold after fold, she kept asking eagerly, 'What is it! It feel like basin.'

But Mass Sam only smiled. Finally, the wrappings were undone, and to her admiring gaze was revealed, gleaming from a recent scrubbing, a beautiful pewter basin, while, most glorious of all, were six Bradalvy crests stamped on the sides of the hexagon.

'I have it now; I have it now!' she cried exulting. 'This have six Buldawby marks on it. I going to see what Miss Marian have to say to this. I beat her. I got Buldawby! I got Buldawby!'

Mrs. Pratt hastened now to rearrange the furnishing of her hall. The chinaware and gleaming glass tumblers; the thick-walled wine glasses with ruby red spots; all were removed from the topmost shelf of the safe, to be placed lower down, in a position less conspicuous; and therefore less honourable. So changed had become her sense of values, that the heavy chocolate mug with the portrait of a long-dead sovereign, and a glistening drug jar with bright gold label, inscribed mystically 'Sod. lod.', were shut up in the lower compartment. The topmost shelf held only the bowl, glowing in solitary grandeur, while beneath lay the remaining Bradalvy trophies.

Such a display, placed just before the open door, where even

passers by in the lane must catch a glance of this gleaming splendour, could not go unnoticed for long. Word got about. Relatives called to behold and gloat. Even some from the opposing camp sank feelings of hostility enough to pay Susan a friendly visit. Swashi Brown, a staunch adherent of Susan, was not backward in employing his peculiar poetic qualities on her behalf.

Night after night, her yard was the gathering place of Mr. Brown and his colleagues, who, ranged in a seated circle, sang responses to their leader's verses. He would stand up, his roasted pimento stick rising and falling like a conductor's baton, as he improvised the theme, while at the end of each verse the surrounding chorus chimed in with the refrain. The first night's proceedings were somewhat after this fashion:

Swashi:	We call for legacy: We bawl for legacy; We go and beg and borrow, And boast to everybody, Say we is for Buldawby.
Chorus :	Half-a-fork and piece-a-spoon; That can get Buldawby? Broke-up-plate and piece-a-knife,
(Fortiss)	That can't get Buldawby!
Swashi:	We sure of legacy; We swear it is for we; We brag to all we (our) neighbour; We say they see us later, When we possess Buldawby.
Chorus:	Half-a-fork, etc. . . .
Swashi:	We start to dress in style; We walk all 'bout with smile, We prance like backra <sup>1</sup> racehorse, And pose on everybody, Since we goin' get Buldawby.
Chorus:	Half-a-fork . . . etc.
Swashi:	To get we (our) legacy, We visit obeahman <sup>2</sup> We work all sort of evil <sup>3</sup> And burn a big black candle To make we (us) get Buldawby.

<sup>1</sup> White people.

<sup>2</sup> Witchdoctor.

<sup>3</sup> Witchcraft.

Chorus:	Half-a-fork . . . etc.
Swashi:	But where is legacy?
	What 'bout we legacy?
	With all we big-mouth braggin',
	All obeah don't do nothin';
	Poor thing; won't get Buldawby!
Chorus:	Half-a-fork . . . etc.

Many other stanzas followed, several of them rather coarse, and a few certainly slanderous. The singing continued until past ten o'clock, when the visitors departed to their homes.

Swashi Brown's manœuvre had been a master stroke. With hostility of a warlike sort Marian's followers could cope; but ridicule was beyond them. A counter-attack along Swashi's lines failed for two reasons; one being that Mr. Brown, himself the foremost local poet, had taken care to shepherd into his fold the best improvisateurs to be had. Furthermore, the Dudwidges lacked the Prattites' financial strength, reinforced as it was by the resources of Mass Sam and Charley Penon. At these singing 'mets' the visitors knew that copious refreshments were always provided, sometimes chocolate, sometimes coffee, frequently lemonade, to wash down plenty biscuits. The only ticket of admission was a mug (not over-large) out of which to drink, and the sole entrance fee a willingness to sing.

An attempt by the lessening Dudwidges to stage an opposing 'met' was a total failure; for Marian lacked the prestige of the silver bowl, and Swashi's editions of Marian's history were far more witty than anything that Marian's followers could produce against Susan. For a period things remained at stalemate, with Miss Dudwidge the queen of a diminishing kingdom; when knowledge of her dangerous position was forced on her by Letitia Yak's request for the return of two spoons. This meant betrayal; since, although Letitia stated that they were needed urgently for home use, Marian knew that the traitress intended passing them over to the other camp. Therefore Letitia's request was refused. Miss Dudwidge offered the loan of two of her own spoons in their place, but to this the other would not agree; and so she retired fuming.

News of this high-handed dealing passed quickly from

mouth to mouth; and many of Marian's most loyal supporters, while decrying Letitia's defection, nevertheless censured Marian's deed. If she started thus, argued the more fearful, what guarantee was there that, after she had got Buldawby, by their aid, she would not say to them, 'Depart, I know you not.'

Swashi was one of the first to hear of the incident, whereat he promised everyone that if they attended the seance the following night, they would have the most interesting time of their lives. His words proved truer than he thought.

The number of visitors exceeded even his optimistic anticipations. A host of new faces came inside the yard, while some of the staunchest of the opposition stood without.

To liven up matters, Swashi changed his methods this night. As soon as the comers entered, they were separated into two lines, the men going to one booth, and women to another, where refreshments were dispensed. This caused a slight delay in starting, but when the singing began, its vigour and heartiness proved Mr. Brown's common sense.

At the commencement, the master of ceremonies began innocently enough. The references were no more scandalous than ordinary. But after the fifth stanza, a change was noticeable. He grew more and more specific, until suppressed excitement greeted the verse:

We so want legacy,  
Must get the legacy,  
We form <sup>1</sup> and say we borrow  
But rob we very fambly,  
We's out to thief Buldawby.

Yet, worse was to follow. After several local obeahmen had been called in to try and kill by wizardry, the head of the opposing faction, Marian, in despair, had sent into another parish for a famous 'workman'. This person who had been introduced into the district under the guise of being a 'cousin', one of her father's family, when he saw the buxom form of the lady, demanded as part of his price that she solace the loneliness of his sleeping hours.

<sup>1</sup> Pretend.

The Dudwidges thought theirs a well kept secret; but what hidden thing could remain long concealed from Swashi? This exploit he now proceeded to render immortal:

	We so want legacy That seer <sup>1</sup> sleep with we. That sure must make the obeah Great obeah full of power, To make we get Buldawby.
Chorus:	Half-a-fork . . . etc.
Swashi:	To get the legacy, We call it fambily. By daytime him is cousin, By night is 'cousin husband'. All that to get Buldawby!
Chorus:	Half-a-fork . . . etc.
Swashi:	Supposing say that we Don't get that legacy; When nine months' time bring trouble, The best name we must call it Is Obeah Son Buldawby.
Chorus:	Marmie, tell me, where's papa? Where is pa Buldawby? Ah, me child, pappa's away, In England, with Buldawby.

The final chorus was new and had been kept secret. Now it came thundering out as a grand finale. Marian, drawn by curiosity, had arrived late secretly and hung back behind the crowd; but imperceptible pressure had so pushed her forward that the ending chorus found her up against the fence. This Swashi observed, so he called for the chorus again, and as all joined in, the last loudly bellowed 'Buldawby' found him pointing his stick at the unfortunate Miss Dudwidge. The crowd behind her prevented retreat, and the Prattites, entering into the spirit of the thing, started yelling: 'Buldawby, Buldawby, Obeah Son Buldawby!'

The victim, penned in as she was, unable to advance, because of the barbed wire fence, and hemmed in on all other sides, underwent the every torment of the damned.

As she struggled to retreat, her foot struck a stone, which

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced see-cr.

instantly suggested something to her. The crowd was too close to allow bending; but her shoe was slipped off in a trice, and the stone caught up by two toes. Then the foot was raised carefully, until her fingers could reach it. Taking careful aim at the master of ceremonies, she sent the missile whizzing with all the energy of avenging justice. Fortunately, Brown saw it and ducked in time. The stone hit 'Thumpah Foot' (wooden legged) George Mard, who let out a yell of pain mingled with sizzling profanity.

Marian's hint acted like a tonic to her disgruntled followers. From the outskirts of the crowd stones rained down on those within the enclosure. Swashi, leaping over several persons' heads, dashed for safety behind the kitched. But others were of sterner stuff. At the first call to arms, Mr. Mard bent down, grabbed a brace of 'ground marbles' (stones) and then commenced a most effective counter offensive at long range. Skirmishing became general; but both forces had not clashed yet. The rear attackers being eager to come to grips, pressed forward on those in front, that the fence was torn down. A sense of righteous anger strengthened the attackers, but weight of numbers assisted the defenders. Mass George, backing up against the house wall, unslipped his wooden leg, using it after the fashion that Umslopogaas employed his famous axe. At length a strongly flung coconut laid low this doughty warrior; but he was able to join the Prattites, when, reallying, they routed the Dudwidgites. On the road, the attackers, made another stand, the women now taking a prominent part in the melee. Then an anguished wail went up; 'Dildo Mackah!' Those too busy to give heed now suffered. Four Prattites, having gone into the bush and cut some barrel cactus, had peeled the lower ends free of thorns sufficiently to get a hand hold. With these formidable clubs, they had returned to the fray. They were just enjoying themselves, when a shout of 'Constab, Constab!' made all who could, flee. But some unfortunates, not alert enough, were held by three constables who had arrived.

The next day, when casualties were counted, it was discovered that no one had suffered serious injury. The other matter, all agreed, after those arrested had been bailed out,



was how to avoid mentioning in court the real cause of contention.

'For if government ever get a smell of it, and this Buldawby business come to the ears of backra (white folk), they is going to take it away. Don't you remember when Simeon did find a Spanish jar of doubloons, how they take it from him and only give him a few pounds? Come make us agree for everybody to plead guilty, and pay.'

This advice of Swashi's they all followed; and Mass Sam, acting as go between was able to get the tribe of Dudwidge to consent to the plan.

When the case came up for trial, each meekly pleaded guilty, paid the fine, and quietly accepted a severe admonition from the magistrate.

After the case both parties returned to their previous status. Swashi, warned by experience, held no more 'mets'.

The English lawyers, on receiving the letters of both parties, had referred the affair to their Jamaican representative, Lawyer Shavewell. He came, interviewed them and took away the entire collection of silverware; in order, as he said, to go into the case more thoroughly.

The contestants, all busily apportioning 'Buldawby' as whim moved them, came in for a rough awakening.

Unknown to them, a very old woman, the last surviving member of the Bradalvy family, had been discovered living in an obscure Haitian village. She was the widow of a French planter. From Mr. Shavewell she learned something of the hope of Susan Pratt and Marian Dudwidge who expected to inherit an estate, solely through the possession of a few old pieces of silver. Madame L'Arane thereupon stated that that in her early childhood, a large amount of silver had been stolen from her home. She could not tell after so long an interval just what had been taken; but there was one thing she remembered; for it had been her godfather's gift to her. It was a pewter hexagonal bowl, stamped on each side with the family arms. That information was enough for the lawyer.

Another visit was paid to the village, where he made diligent inquiry as to the ownership of the several articles. Everyone, confident that this meant the partition of 'Buldawby', rushed

forward. Mr. Shavewell heard all claims, nodded wisely, and retired.

They learned the sequel, when later all were arrested for larceny of silver, the property of the Bradalvy estate.

Both parties, united in adversity, combined to employ a brilliant young lawyer who showed that, as none of the accused was more than a child of five when the theft had been committed, they could not have been the criminals; and he emphasized the fact that it was not customary under British law for children to be punished for their parents' rascality.

They got off; but, of course, the lawyer's bill had to be paid.

## THE COW THAT LAUGHED

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R. L. C. AARONS

DEEP in thought Buddyjoe plodded homewards. He was returning from a 'ninth night' meeting at the other end of the village but contrary to all previous experience it had left him feeling more depressed than ever. The singing and general air of conviviality had served but to remind him of the precariousness of his own lot. The long monopoly he had enjoyed in his 'profession' had at last been seriously challenged. A new obeah man, a stranger had come to live in the district and was drawing great crowds from far and near, and unless he could counter his rival's growing popularity by some astounding success, he might as well clear out and try and earn his living elsewhere.

Engaged in these melancholy reflections he was about turning the bend of the road by Stephen Dennister's place, when his thoughts were rudely interrupted by a queer sort of laugh coming it seemed from the pasture. His first impulse was to ignore it. 'Oldtime people' always warned against paying

attention to strange sounds heard at night. But curiosity got the better of him. He peered across into the darkness.

'Who dat?' he called out a little uncertainly.

No answer came.

'Ah say who is dat in dere?' he repeated louder, emboldened by the sound of his own voice.

Still no reply.

'Well den, Ah'm comin' to find out for meself,' he announced with an air of bravado he was far from feeling at the moment.

He took his stick and began to beat the bush about the road-side hoping to give the impression that someone was advancing through the thick undergrowth. But as not the slightest notice was taken of this ruse he desisted and held a council of war, the sum and substance of which was, should he or should he not bother to investigate further. There was no real reason, of course, why he should. Mere 'fastness' on his part. Still, suppose it was only some of the boys of the village who had lay-waited him for the purpose of playing a practical joke! If he ran away, the story would go the rounds that he was a coward and that, as he rightly reflected, 'would be de end of everyt'ing.'

Seeing, therefore, that there was no way out of the predicament, he took a firm grip on himself, crept carefully under the barbed wire fence, and gingerly made his way in the direction from which the laugh seemed to come, not neglecting to bolster up his courage by calling out at frequent intervals:

'Better mind you'self. Ah comin'. Mind!'

He stumbled and bruised his way over stones and through thick shrubbery for a couple of chains or so, then suddenly halted, his heart pounding madly, for not two yards in front of him in a little clearing on the ground was a whitish object.

Terror, stark terror took possession of him and held him rooted to the spot. But as his eyes became accustomed to the object he saw with relief that it was only a cow. He went forward cautiously and examined it. Yes, it was a cow. Of that there could be no doubt, and sick with a bad cold, too, for its breath came and went in loud painful snorts not unlike an old pair of wheezy bellows.

But even before he had properly taken in all this, the cow raised its head and coughed once—twice—three times. A succession of three short and deep staccato notes that even at that distance sounded exactly like some sinister inhuman laughter.

For one paralysed moment Buddyjoe could only stand and stare with bulging eyeballs at the sick animal before him. Then understanding came in a rush.

'Me Gawd!' he ejaculated in amazement as he reached for his handkerchief and wiped his face.

Badly shaken, yet with an immense relief at the turn events had taken, Buddyjoe retraced his steps and once more regained the roadway.

So that was it! A cow with a bad cough. It had sounded exactly like a real laugh. Anybody would have been fooled. Of course they would. Ha ha!

He continued his way. But his brain was working; working with the swift low cunning of his kind. It had sounded exactly like a laugh. It had fooled him. It was most likely then that others hearing it for the first time would be similarly fooled. If he could get hold of that cow what wonders couldn't he work with it!

The sheer brazenness of the idea carried him away with excitement. It would be the very thing to re-establish his position and win back all his old clients. He knew, too, what case he would first use it on. Dan Smearbow's of course. Dan had offered him ten pounds if he could so 'work' it that his daughter, Mary, would get young 'Zekie' Grantham whom all the girls in the district were running after. Good reason why, too. Grantham was doing well with his provision and liquor shop and besides this: he had lately bought some lands from Government and was going in for food production in a big way. Added to which he was sober and steady.

At the time when Smearbow had come to him, Buddyjoe had listened gravely to the proposal and had promised to do what he could for Mary. What he didn't tell old man Smearbow, however, was that 'Zekie' had once in the strictest confidence told him of his partiality—quite unknown to her—for a little 'brown skin' possessed of a smile, which to use his own expressive phraseology, was simply a 'caution'. Discreet pressure had

elicited the interesting information that the little 'brown skin' so ardently worshipped at a distance was none other than Mary herself. Of course, he could have retailed this pleasant little bit of news to the parties most concerned and so put an end to all doubts and fears. He had no difficulty, however, in resisting the temptation. Ten pounds was ten pounds no matter how you looked at it. Besides, Dan Smearbow was an old fool. Fancy a man of that age believing in obeah. And he a church member, too!

Under the comforting cloak of darkness, Buddyjoe's shaggy face with its pair of thick overhanging lips broadened out into a wide grin of satisfaction. Yes, he would use that cow on Smearbow's case if only its owner would sell it to him. He would make his fortune with it. A cow that could laugh wasn't to be met with every day.

Dennister, who was firmly convinced that it was Buddyjoe who had 'obeahed' his cow, was only too glad to sell it when that gentleman presented himself on the following morning and offered to buy it. He let it go for a mere song and Buddyjoe led the sick animal away. One glance at the cow, however, made him realize that he could not afford to lose any time. It was more sick than he had imagined. He would have to attend to Dan Smearbow's business right away. That very night.

'Ah'll work a piece o' obeah they'll never forget,' Buddyjoe promised himself busy with his preparations.

Soon after nightfall he set out. His young nephew who lived with him walked on in front leading the sick cow. He, with his bag in one hand and a lantern in the other, brought up the rear. Smearbow's house was a couple of miles away so it was necessary to start early.

Confident as he was as to the ultimate outcome of the affair between Mary and young Grantham, Buddyjoe couldn't help realizing how great was the risk he was running in staking all his faith in a sick cow. Suppose it collapsed before he was ready as it well might! The cow was sick, very sick. He had half a mind to turn back and wait until some other time. But he brushed his fears away as cowardly. One must be prepared to run risks at times.

As soon as they were within earshot of the Smearbow home

the small procession halted and Buddyjoe gagged the cow securely. On no account must it be heard before its time. Then he took some green and red cloth from his bag and wound it securely around its horns, sticking in a few leaves here and there to heighten the general effect of frightfulness.

Satisfied with his work so far, Buddyjoe entrusted the cow to his nephew with instructions to lead it around under the sitting room window and there await the signal to remove the gag. He would throw some stuff out of the window when he was ready, he told the boy. And, of course, he was to keep himself out of sight. Making sure he understood what was required of him he took up his bag and went into the house to make his arrival known.

In a few minutes he had everything ready. The sitting room was cleared of all its furniture except for a low couch and a table. From his bag he produced half a dozen or so small bottles and set them carefully on the table.

Moving about here and there in the suffused glow of the red lamp shade he had substituted for the one generally in use, he seemed the perfect embodiment of all the powers of low cunning and trickery. His black face under a fantastic head-gear decorated with the tail feathers of a cock, shone with a ghastly frightfulness that was increased tenfold by the unearthly reddish glow imparted to his big uneven yellow teeth. And as though to complete this nightmare figure of horror, he had discarded his coat in favour of an old black waistcoat trimmed about the edges with white tape and decorated above the pockets with the immemorial symbols of the wonder worker, the cross bones and skull.

As soon as he had completed his preparations and made sure that his nephew was in position under the window he took up his wand, struck a pose, and in a deep guttural announced:

'Bring in de damsel!' And into the room there came a young girl of eighteen or thereabouts supported by her parents.

'Lay her on de couch,' he next commanded, 'no, not like dat. Yes, on her back.'

When this had been done, he asked:

'Have you got de photograph?'

There was some little stir among the girl's parents at this,

and finally one of them went into another room returning soon after with a picture obviously cut from a recent newspaper.

Buddyjoe took it and saw that it represented a group of people taken on the occasion of some local bridge opening ceremony, and bending forward to cut the tape stretched across it was the Honourable Member for the parish smiling his usual affable smile. Grouped around him were several of the village worthies, among whom young Grantham could be distinctly recognized, his head and shoulders alone being visible.

'Ah don't want de whole of dis,' frowned Buddyjoe, and proceeded to tear away bits leaving only what could be made out of Grantham. This he took and pinned on to the wall opposite the girl on the couch.

'Can you see it from dere?' he asked.

The girl giggled and said yes and giggled again.

'Dis is no laughing matter,' he rebuked her sternly. 'Dis is serious, very serious business.'

'Undress,' was the next command.

She began to giggle again. 'Take off—everything?' she asked, looking incredulously at him out of her great big eyes.

'Yes, everyting.'

Plainly not knowing what she should do the young girl turned appealingly to her mother who all this while had been standing motionless at the head of the couch, her hands folded across her ample bosom. Thus appealed to she slowly came to life and for a moment or two considered the question. Then she broke her silence.

'You'd better do it, darter,' she counselled, 'it's fe you' own good.'

Accompanied therefore by much self-conscious giggling, the young girl did as she was told, Buddyjoe fuming impatiently at the inordinate fuss she was making over what was after all a very simple matter. Time was going and there was no telling what was happening to the cow outside.

As soon as she was undressed he poured out some stuff from one of the bottles on the table and, ordering her to keep her eyes riveted upon the picture on the opposite wall, he began to rub her all over with it chanting a weird little tune under his

breath the while. Backwards and forwards he went, using a little from each of the bottles and all to the accompaniment of the weird little tune he hummed.

The girl's father so far hadn't uttered a single word since coming into the room, so absorbed he was in the proceedings. But curiosity got the better of him at last.

'What—what sort of oil is dat?' he asked in an awed constrained voice, indicating the bottle Buddyjoe was then using and which seemed to emit the worst smell of the evening.

For a moment it appeared almost as if Buddyjoe would have disregarded the question. But he evidently changed his mind.

'Dis?' He held it up. 'Oil of love-her-well.'

He was now working feverishly. Fears of failure began to frighten him. Suppose he had gagged the cow too tightly! Or that it wouldn't cough when it was required!

No trace of the anxiety he felt could be seen on his face, however, as he carefully yet swiftly mixed together in a basin all the stuff he had been using. Ordering the girl to wrap herself in the sheet he began to daub the photograph of the man so ardently desired with the mixture.

Over and over he went, concentrating especially on the region where his heart would have been hadn't it been blocked by the arm of the man in front of him. And it was not until the picture was an unrecognizable blur that he left off and put down the basin on the table. He turned to the girl's parents.

'If you go to de window,' he told them in a voice that vibrated with suppressed excitement, 'you'll see a young cow underneath.'

He waited until they had tip-toed quietly to the window indicated and nervously peered out. The sudden sight of the cow not eight feet under them, whose neck and horns were gaily wrapped in bunting and decorated with green leaves, was too much for them. They stumbled back with a gasp of surprise.

'Well, den,' proceeded Buddyjoe, his voice tense, as he took up the basin. 'Ah'm going to pour dis stuff on de cow, an'—an' if it laugh—'

'What!' shouted both husband and wife together, thinking the man was mad.



'If it laugh, Ah said,' repeated Buddyjoe slowly, 'you' darter will get Grant'am.'

'Cow laugh—?' they began incredulously.

Buddyjoe, however, paid no attention to them. He walked to the window and though his hands shook ever so slightly, he deliberately emptied the contents of the basin outside.

An eternity of seconds seemed to go by and still nothing happened. The trio simply stood there and stared at the open window as if hypnotized. The stillness became so oppressive that it hurt. Nobody seemed even to breathe.

'—will get Grant'am,' Buddyjoe repeated mechanically, his face a sickly yellow under his black skin.

Eternity seemed to run its course.

Then suddenly out of the night it came. Like a flood. Not merely once or twice or three times, but over and over again. Short and deep staccato notes which even at that distance sounded exactly like some sinister inhuman laughter.

Husband and wife stared unbelievably at the window, then at each other and shook with terror they made no attempt to control.

'Me Gawd!' they breathed in unison, aghast.

Buddyjoe, tired and spent, sagged against the wall and for the first time that evening his face relaxed into a smile. . . .

Deep in thought Buddyjoe plodded his way homewards, himself and his young nephew the only signs of life on the deserted roadway, for the cow was not with them. It had laughed its last and had been left lying in a heap under the sitting room window of Dan Smearbow's house.

# THE JAMAICAN POETS

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## WYCLIFFE BENNETT

(Hon. Secretary of the Poetry League of Jamaica)

INSTEAD of listing the names of all the Jamaican poets who are known to have published verse (which is almost all I could do in a brief article of this nature), I propose to deal with ideas and tendencies that have to be understood and appreciated, a method which I consider to be generally a correct one in undertaking anything like an intelligent and informed criticism or survey of the literature of any country, and in arriving at the merit and in fathoming the sincerity of creative writers when you assess them individually. (By this method many favourite authors might not be mentioned, and many less popular ones named.) It is my purpose briefly to observe the development of the spirit of Jamaica, and to show that this development is reflected in the history of our poetic literature.

The history of Jamaica is indeed checkered. Among the most important events in the annals of our country are (1) the Discovery by Columbus, 1494; (2) the Conquest by Pen and Venables, 1655; (3) the Abolition of Slavery, 1838; (4) the Surrendering of the Constitution, 1865, and (5) the New Constitution, 1944.

Nothing is known of any poetic literature among the Arawaks; and the circumstances of life do not suggest any notable literary achievement before 1838, except, of course, the Negro Spirituals, which are in themselves both a commentary on their time and a spiritual escape from the conditions under which the slaves lived.

In 1838, the shackles were buried. The soul of Jamaica was released, and the new conditions of living provided men with the opportunity for more leisure: leisure to think (to contemplate one's surroundings and life)—leisure to interpret and to articulate what one saw.

It becomes obvious that our earliest poets were not

Jamaicans in the sense of being born here; they were settlers, among them the Reverend John Radcliffe born in Ireland, 1815, William Morrison in Scotland, 1838, and Henry Shirley Bunbury an Irishman born in 1843. They were gentlemen of culture, and had immigrated to Jamaica either as missionaries, as pioneers or on retirement. They versified, and though they were largely Scotsmen, Irishmen, or Englishmen writing Scottish, Irish, or English verse in Jamaica, they nevertheless wrote. The ability to articulate had to be fed by observation and contemplation, and in time they began publishing in local newspapers verses based on local happenings and on events of Imperial significance.

It was from this school of early Victorian writers and what I shall call 'bicaious' loyalty that Tom Redcam (Thomas Henry MacDermot), our first national poet, father of our poetic literature and first Poet Laureate of Jamaica, emerged. Realizing the gap in our literature from a historical point of view, he set to work in an effort to span, with chronicle poems, the period between the Age of Discovery and that in which he lived. Of these poems, his *San Gloria* of epic dimensions is undoubtedly, in retrospect, the quintessential statement on the Discovery of Jamaica. Following in the wake of Tom Redcam there has been a grand tradition of writers.

As if to give our poetry body—the heavy philosophy, the prophesying, the universality, the glimpses of that 'other self'—it seems to have been the design of the Schemer of things to have endowed with the gift of song Walter Adolphe Roberts, Claude McKay, Arabelle Moulton Barrett, Arthur Nicholas, J. E. Clare McFarlane, Constance Hollar, Lena Kent, Vivian L. Virtue, Tropica, Roger Mais, Una Marson, Archie Lindo, George Campbell, Hugh Carberry, Phillip Sherlock and many others, to enshrine in the haunting memorableness of verse the enchanting beauty of our countryside and the thoughts and aspirations of our people.

Both Jamaica and America take a proprietary interest in the internationally known Claude McKay and W. Adolphe Roberts. Claude McKay's challenging

" If we must die—let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot."

represents a point of transition in the literature of the American Negro. W. Adolphe Roberts, the most un-English of Jamaican poets, is a novelist and historian by vocation. He sets down his ideals in verse. An incomparable sonneteer, his *Peacocks* is one of the fine sonnets in the English language. A patriotic Jamaican, his recent *The Maroon Girl* (which appears in this issue) is a remarkable example of poetic compression and chronicling.

Of our younger poets, Vivian L. Virtue and George Campbell are perhaps the most outstanding. Virtue is poetically speaking the godchild of Keats and Shelley. His Villanelle Sequence, *King Solomon and Queen Balkis*, which is one of the showpieces of modern Jamaican literature, represents the finest use to which this verse form has been put in the whole of English letters. George Campbell, foremost writer of 'free verse' in Jamaica, is a poet who received considerable attention when his *First Poems* appeared. His *Play Without Scenery*, which was performed before a very select audience, is an excellent first attempt at poetic drama, and suggests that this writer has very important work to achieve.

At this point, I pass on to the man who founded and is the invincible forger of the destinies of the Poetry League of Jamaica, the main stream of literature in the island. John Ebenezer Clare McFarlane, himself a considerable poet, has done more than any other man, dead or alive, to convince Jamaicans of the importance of having a literature of their own. The first anthology of Jamaican poetry, *Voices from Summerland*, was compiled and edited by him in 1930, and the farsightedness and genuineness of his efforts can be gauged from what the London *Times* had to say on the maturity of intelligent thought as expressed in our poetry as far back as then: 'The canons of dominions will not be finally made up even after India and Burma have been added to it.' Fifteen years after the London *Times* said this, in assessing our poetry, the New Constitution was granted giving us a larger measure of responsible government.

One critic speaks of writers as archaeologists of social fabric.

More important, perhaps, is the great part they have played in laying the foundations of society. Further political

advancement for Jamaica and indeed for the whole Caribbean will not only be foreshadowed in the literature of the region, but will depend to a very considerable extent upon what the writers will have had to say.

## POEMS

### THE MAROON GIRL

By W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS

I see her on a lonely forest track,  
Her level brows made salient by the sheen  
Of flesh the hue of cinnamon. The clean  
Blood of the hunted, vanished Arawak  
Flows in her veins with blood of white and black.  
Maternal, noble-breasted is her mien;  
She is a peasant, yet she is a queen.  
She is Jamaica poised against attack.

Her woods are hung with orchids; the still flame  
Of red hibiscus lights her path, and starred  
With orange and coffee blossoms is her yard.  
Fabulous, pitted mountains close the frame.  
She stands on ground for which her fathers died;  
Figure of savage beauty, figure of pride.

## VIEUX CARRÉ

By W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS

This city is the child of France and Spain,  
 That once lived nobly, ardent as the heat  
 In which it came to birth. Alas, how fleet  
 The years of love and arms! There now remain,  
 Bleached by the sun and mouldered by the rain,  
 Impassive fronts that guard some rare retreat,  
 Some dim, arched salon, or some garden sweet,  
 Where dreams persist and the past lives again.

The braided iron of the balconies  
 Is like locked hands, fastidiously set  
 To bar the world. But the proud mysteries  
 Showed me a glamour I may not forget:  
 Your face, camellia-white upon the stair,  
 Framed in the midnight thicket of your hair.

## ON A MONUMENT TO MARTÍ

By W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS

Cuba, dishevelled, naked to the waist,  
 Springs up erect from the dark earth and screams  
 Her joy in liberty. The metal gleams  
 Where her chains broke. Magnificent her haste  
 To charge into the battle and to taste  
 Revenge on the oppressor. Thus she seems  
 But she were powerless without the dreams  
 Of him who stands above, unsmiling, chaste.

Yes, over Cuba on her jubilant way  
 Broods the Apostle, José Julián Martí  
 He shaped her course of glory, and the day  
 The guns first spoke he died to make her free.  
 That night a meteor flamed in splendid loss  
 Between the North Star and the Southern Cross.

# I AM THE SHADOW OF ALL THINGS

by KENNETH BRIAN SCOTT

I am the shadow of all things  
Sought and never attained,  
Hunger for Peace  
Peace which begins in a sigh  
And ends with sleep.

The sum of all man's urge  
To live, create, and procreate  
Make wars and beauteous sounds,  
All actions and abstractions  
Are preparations for fulfilment.

All is resolved in me  
Light, music, air, sea  
Earthquake and famine  
All matter and all energy  
Resolved in me.

I am the beginning, the release,  
The resolution of base matter  
Into life  
Infinite, absolute and eternal.  
I am death, sleep to end sleep.

## ON IMMORTALITY

By KENNETH BRIAN SCOTT

The meaning of a well remembered prayer  
 Is heard sometimes (within one) oftener  
 By sense of rhythm than the actual words  
 Often uneasy to reflect upon  
 (Forgive our trespasses—as we forgive)

The melody of a forgotten hymn  
 Haunts the subconscious, now seeming clear  
 Now out of reach—all but the rhythm  
 Lost in the fact and rule of thinking.  
 (The children inherit the Kingdom.)

Time rusts the keen blade of remembrance  
 And makes a mirror of the glass hiding  
 To-morrow—what we call the future.  
 Now, is the sorrow and the pain we keep  
 To justify the peace, the joy the laughter.

We are immortal you and I  
 Not bound by nature to belong  
 To earth or sky—to living for so long—  
 An empty span within a vacuum  
 A local time of brief awareness.

This time of present being is  
 But a phase in continuity  
 Of an existence universal  
 As a cosmic ray—as timeless as  
 The growth of *Homo sapiens*—from algæ.

And mortal sleep, divisor of the phases  
 Does not end—does not begin a life.  
 As the eternal seasons sift the sands  
 He ticks one moment in a timeless age,  
 And rings the angelus.



## THE QUEST

by VIVIAN L. VIRTUE

I saw go down a Monmouth street  
 From pastures of the Wye  
 A shepherd with his homing sheep  
 Whose backs were like a burning heap  
 Dropped from the fleecy sky  
 So hectic with the day's retreat . . .  
 And lone, entranced, stood I.

I stood beside that kindled way  
 And watched them slowly west;  
 Heroic clarions filled the air,  
 Divine resolves, emprises rare:  
 I know not at whose high behest  
 I turned and followed through the grey,  
 A Jason in their quest.

## SONNET

by VIVIAN L. VIRTUE

I have seen March within the Ebony break  
 In golden fire of fragrance unsuppressed;  
 And April bring the Lignum-Vitæ dressed  
 In dusty purple; known pale rust awake  
 The Mango's earlier boughs; the Poincian take  
 Brave red to court Midsummer. I have pressed  
 The Cassia's spendthrift yellow to my breast:  
 I could love Earth for one tree's royal sake!

I could find faith, abandoning despair  
 For all Time's unfulfilled, unblossomed hopes,  
 Watching the long, green patience of a tree,  
 How, undiscouraged, uncomplaining, bare,  
 It waits until the vernal secret gropes  
 Up to the efflorescence that shall be.

## VILLANELLE OF LIBERTY

by VIVIAN L. VIRTUE

Still from its ashes Liberty is reborn.  
One is the quenching and renewing flame.  
Night will unsheathe the shining sword of morn.

Though from the plundered years a cry forlorn  
Grieved for the sweeping scourge, the bitter shame,  
Still from its ashes Liberty is reborn.

To-day it is the trampled seed of corn;  
To-morrow garners it to golden fame.  
Night will unsheathe the shining sword of morn.

And hopes as thick as dew will then adorn  
Its bosom, singing joys possess its frame.  
Still from its ashes Liberty is reborn.

Let tyrants scoff, degrade it in their scorn!  
It yet shall rise, a challenge and a claim.  
Night will unsheathe the shining sword of morn.

Then shall the blast of its triumphant horn  
Sound through the world its reassuring name.  
Still from its ashes Liberty is reborn.  
Night will unsheathe the shining sword of morn.

# SPEED

By MICKY HENDRIKS

We have lured speed and trapped it  
With the cunning of our brains  
And with steel ropes have strapped it  
To the fibres of our veins.

We have chased speed and caught it  
In gears and moving parts  
Befriended speed and taught it  
All the secrets of our hearts.

Yes we sought speed and found it  
In metal wheels and springs  
And to our souls have bound it  
With chains and metal rings.

# SONG FOR A SYNTHESIS

by G. A. HAMILTON

I was salt water, washing all alien shores,  
Citizen of the world, calling no land home,  
Creature of flux and change.

Burns in my blood the icy fire of Norway  
The hot red flame of Africa  
The even glow of England.

Now tides compel into this inland sea,  
Out of my life, out of this land shall grow  
Fruit strong with the salt's sharp bitterness,  
Rose warm with the sun's red glow,  
Song for eternity,  
Song for a synthesis.

## THE FINAL MAN

By BASIL MCFARLANE

This is the final man;  
 Who lives within the dusk,  
 Who is the dusk  
 Always.

To know birth and to know death  
 Is one emotion,  
 To look before and after with one eye,  
 To see the Whole,  
 To know the Truth,  
 To know the World and be without a World:  
 In this light that is no light,  
 This time that is no time, to be  
 And to be free:  
 This is the final man,  
 Who lives within the dusk,  
 Who is the dusk  
 Always.

## JAMAICA, MARCH 1947

by CALVIN BOWEN

## I

But if I lose faith—  
 Lose faith in Life  
 In Truth in Honesty;  
 See burning Hope and Trust cast to the ground:  
 Ambition checked  
 All Decency denied—  
 What chance have I to build the mighty land  
 The race of people proud to walk the earth  
 Strong-limbed, clear-eyed, a noble breed of men?

POEMS

II

This is my land  
This is my soil  
This is my stand  
This is my toil.

III

The beacon still burns bright upon the hill  
The road is long and dark and trouble-filled  
But there is light and hope beyond the gloom  
And dawn will come however black the night.

IV

Come, comrades, up!  
Let us arise and go  
The future waits  
To-morrow will be ours.

POEM

by K. E. INGRAM

Sorrow distils into your heart  
On this bleak morning  
Sorrow descends from the high mountain-tops  
Like soft rain falling  
Sorrow bleeds out of every blade of grass  
Cold drops on my cold hands.

And every flower that gave you gladness  
Now lives in sadness  
And the hot tongue falls heavy  
With the weary tale  
Dragged from the heart, the mind, the soul.

O, give me words to tell  
Words to sing you sadness

O me not blind to mountain or to vale  
Yet dumb to tell my tale.

## MAGDALENE

It was his serenity  
Brought me sanity.  
There was no lust in his eyes  
No look of surprise  
At my naked flesh  
No willingness  
To be caught in the mesh  
Of the loveliness  
That had bored my ears.

I felt secure  
As I knelt at his feet  
And had no fears  
That at dead of night  
I would hear the beat  
In an outside room,  
Creak of a door  
And demand of my womb.

It was his serenity  
That held me so  
I would not go  
Away from the side  
Of man enticed  
His passions denied  
For his way of life.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

# WRONG TICKET

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PERCY L. MILLER

THE voice speaking through the public address system announced that Ken Carty had won, Sam Levy placed second, and Enos Williams placed third. It came back after a pause of two minutes to add that Carty paid twenty-four shillings on the win-ticket and eighteen and six on the place; that Levy paid seven shillings to place, and that Williams paid two pounds to place. From his corner of the pavilion, Eddie Bowman took a small packet of pool tickets from his coat pocket and mechanically destroyed them.

'If something don't happen in this last race,' he grimly told himself, 'I might as well take my measurement from now for that suit of prison clothes.'

It was Lindo Gold Cup night at the Jowl Cycling Company in Kingston, Jamaica. It was also Christmas Eve night. Around Eddie in the pavilion, a huge stream of laughing and gaily-dressed people ebbed and flowed and swirled in the way gatherings at a cycle race meeting will. Out on the track a few indefatigable riders kept circling in and out of the alternate pools of light and shadow that had replaced the brilliant floodlighting of race-time. In the darkness beyond the track a myriad cigarette ends smouldered and glowed, tier upon tier, like serried ranks of unmoving fireflies, marking the place where the hard-cash customers and the mass following of cycling sat patiently waiting for the next thrill to come up.

Every now and then the burst of a giant fire-cracker, or the machine-gun rattle of a series of small ones, broke sharply upon the night air from somewhere. There was the constant, not altogether unmusical scream of tin horns and fee-fees, blown by children inside the meeting and on the streets beyond. An incandescent star-light occasionally would soar skyward from somewhere out on the edge of the meeting, curve gracefully, and come down in a blaze of white light.

Constant through all ran the ceaseless shrill of the small-boy

vendors at the meeting, for ever offering mint sticks, peanuts, biscuits, chocolates, and cashew nuts for sale.

Eddie listened, desolate for a time, to the exchanges going on around him, wishing happy Christmas. Half-bitterly he wondered how happy his own was going to be. Then, recognizing oncoming self-sympathy, he shook himself straight and stepped off in the direction of the cyclists' dressing-rooms and recreation quarters.

'Got to find that fellow who gave me the tip that I didn't take on the third race,' he muttered. 'Maybe he knows something different from what everybody else is thinking.'

Between pavilion and dressing-room his thoughts slipped by a kind of necessity to the subject that had dominated them for a full fortnight now, and had finally brought him to to-night's cycle meeting. Darn tough break maybe to have to go to prison for something he really didn't start, he mentally lamented. But—Hazel was the finest girl he'd known and he would do it all over again for her sake, even if it landed him in worse trouble than he was in.

With a rush of tenderness, Eddie recalled that the first time he had seen Hazel he was standing at a political meeting at the corner of Cambridge Street and Victoria Street, in Franklin Town. She hadn't been attending the meeting, she was just passing in the company of a fat woman, whom he afterwards learned was her mother. But one look at her and he had left the meeting instantaneously to trail, furtive and futile, behind her. He'd known then and there that he could never love another woman the way he would love this one.

Getting to know her had been hard work. He had passed her home in Elletson Road in the afternoons and nights consistently for weeks, hoping that she would see and finally get to recognize him. She did; but that hadn't brought them on talking terms. Then a couple of times he had met her on the bus and had been lucky each time in having a seat to offer her. Matters improved with this, but only very slightly.

One night, while on his way home, he had caught sight of her going into pictures. He'd immediately headed in himself, contrived to get a seat beside her, and to exchange pleasantries



during the showing. She would smile at him and bow whenever they met on the streets after that; but the main portion of her fences still remained bafflingly up.

It was at the union dance at the Spring Garden night club that he'd got the first real opportunity to get up close to her, and had also landed into the present dilemma. The other people in her party having gone out dancing, Hazel was sitting around a table in the vicinity of the bar, alone, when a tough-looking number went up and asked her to dance. She'd refused. He, Eddie, had had a couple of heavenly dances with her before and was returning for still yet another when he heard the fellow being abusive.

'If the lady don't want to dance with you, why don't you leave her alone and stop annoying her?' he'd asked, laying a firm hand on the other's shoulder.

For reply, the fellow had landed him one on the jaw. Things had warmed up after that, distinctly. He'd floored the fellow with a right, and the fellow had come up swinging a chair. In the battle royal that followed, chairs and bottles had flown freely, the valuable mirror behind the club bar was smashed, and damage done extensively to room, furniture, and fixtures.

The police had come in later and arrested him and the fellow on charges of disorderly conduct and malicious destruction of property.

Hazel had acted truc-blue in the trouble that followed with the law. In course, she'd given him permission to visit her at home, and one night when he took her home from pictures she'd made no objection when he attempted to kiss her. She had brushed aside, too, her own and her people's prejudice against entering a court-room and had given evidence on his account at the hearing; but even this hadn't prevented the axe from falling. The magistrate had found him and the fellow guilty and ordered a fine of ten pounds each plus splitting the cost of the damages. This the club managers had fixed at roughly sixty pounds.

The alternative to meeting it was three months imprisonment.

His own resources hadn't at the time permitted his finding

the fifty pounds to which it all came. And even now, almost at the end of the fortnight that the court had allowed him to pay, he'd been able to raise little more than half the sum.

So now to-night, Christmas Eve night, he'd taken two pounds out of the precious store and in desperation come to the cycle meeting, Hazel was along with him, only he'd kept dark from her all the time the trouble he was in with raising the money. He'd won insignificantly on the first two events, lost rather more heavily on the succeeding ones, with the result that he had now only ten shillings left of the original amount.

Unless something happened in the oncoming ten-miler, the last and the blue riband event, there was only one thing would happen on the day after Boxing Day. That was the time the court had ordered that he must pay up or take the unpleasant alternative.

Eddie had reached the cyclists' dressing-room quarters without being quite conscious of it. In fact, all of a sudden he found himself in a corridor into which opened the doors of a number of rooms. Corridor and rooms appeared deserted. Those cyclists who were not taking part in the last race were either seconding those who were, or were busy patronizing the pools, or were just plainly sitting out on the cyclists' stand waiting to enjoy the race like everybody else. Eddie was just about getting back out into the open when voices in a nearby dressing-room arrested him.

The voices were low, but in the all-prevailing quiet of the place the words of the conversation were distinct.

'It's all right, I tell you,' one of the voices was saying, urgently. Eddie thought he recognized the little tipster of earlier in the evening. 'All you gotta do, stick close to Hall an' when he moves up to cut off Holmes' get-away on the inside, you position up and stop him from swervin' out to the bank. Mac and Maitland 'll be right behind to stop him from makin' any back-play. There's bound to be at least eight thousand winning tickets on this race, and if Lecky wins he can't pay less than about twenty-thirty pounds per ticket. All the punters' backin' Holmes and a few others Harris. We'll clean up, I tell you.'

'What about Martin?' The second voice had a strain of doubt and hesitancy in it, and Eddie did not recognize the owner. 'You know, he's fit enough to give even Holmes trouble, and he might get away to beat Lecky to it.'

'Martin? Oh, Martin's all right. It's fixed so he won't butt in.' 'And White?'

'White's fixed too. If Martin or any of the near-top men win, some of the public's let in, see? Lecky wins, and we keep all the mazuma among us.'

Holmes was the champion cyclist and the one whom nine out of every ten punters were backing to take the ten-miles classic. Martin, White, and Harris were the leading contenders. Lecky, Maitland, Hall, were contestants also. Eddie could not place who the man with the tipster was, but plainly he was in the race too. And, equally plainly, a plot was cooking to fix the results.

Eddie became rigid where he was standing.

The rider's voice presently resumed. 'What about Robinson?' it asked.

'Old Robinson?' the tipster was jocose, contemptuous. 'Well, what about him? When last you seen him place or anything in his last coupla hundred starts? No need to let him in on this, I say. Ten chances to one he'll be dead beat half-way through the race and will fall out, after gapping the field in the openin' stanzas as usual. An' if he do last to the end, he'll be a coupla hundred yards behind the second-to-last man.'

'Robinson's no use in a deal like this, and lettin' him in is only splittin' up the takin's. You keep yourself quiet and help hold Holmes an' there'll be big money in it for you an' everybody.'

The cyclist must have been satisfied for presently footsteps started coming towards the corridor. Quickly Eddie slipped through a nearby door and closed it softly behind him. He waited until the footsteps faded out of the building before venturing out himself.

His first impulse was to rush to the stewards and report the whole matter. Half-way to the pavilion he reflected that they were hardly likely to believe him and that, anyway, it would be impossible for them to act until *after* the race was over.

Meantime, the plot for boxing up Holmes was so clever, it was touch and go whether it could ever be proved as a plot.

Then temptation came to besiege him. Here in his hand was information that could straighten all his troubles. All he had to do was buy a couple of tickets on Lecky. The dividend per ticket would then be not as much as the conspirators figured but his multiple takings would more than pay the court. The proceedings were far from honest, but then . . . he veered and bee-lined for the nearest pool.

At the pool punters were still thickly mustered and clamouring. The clock showed only five minutes before the 'stopsales' order. Regretfully but firmly Eddie elbowed and pushed to the front, getting out his money the while. At the counter the din was terrific however. Time passed before he got attention.

'Six Holmes to win an' a Harris an' a Martin to place!'

'A Holmes to win and a Harris to win!'

'Another Holmes. . . '

'Three Harris to win!'

'Gimme four place tickets on White!'

'Four Maitland to place!'

'Two more White. . . '

At last Eddie caught an attendant. 'Four Leckys to win,' he called.

He handed over his remaining ten shillings and got two shillings change. A feeling of recklessness then seized him. The two shillings were to take home Hazel in case he lost. But he couldn't face the thought of losing. There was too much at stake. He had to win. Resolving this he turned to the counter again.

It was now one and a half minutes to go. The din had swollen to a roar. He had just caught an attendant again when a burly punter thrust him aside from behind, made the call in his place.

'Six Holmes to win, two Harris to win, an' a Robinson to win!' the big fellow called.

The calling all around was deafening.

'Three Maitland to place!'

'Another Maitland. . . '

'A Hall and a Holmes to place!'

'Four McIntosh to win an' place!'

'Two more Hall. . .'

'Two Leckys to win!'

Startled by the unusual last call, Eddie forgot the big man who had jostled him to look at the man to his left. It was his friend, the little tipster. Just then the attendant came back with the big fellow's tickets and Eddie dropped everything to get his call in.

'Another!' he shouted, waving his four Leckys, and simultaneously paying the two shillings.

The starting-gun barked just as he reached the railings and squeezed into a position of vantage.

Eddie could not remember when he had ever watched a race as packed with suspense as was the ten-miler for the Lindo Gold Cup.

Just as the little tipster predicted, Robinson, an ageing veteran, quickly opened a gap between himself and the field and by the fifth lap was almost stalking the last man. Martin accepted the challenge and by ten laps had taken up the field to the fugitive.

A beautifully built rider holding an easy seat, Holmes, the champion, moved out of the pack at the fifteenth lap and positioned third from front. Harris stuck him close. Martin kept the lead he had won from Robinson and White rode second. Robinson gradually dropped off to the rear but though evidently tired, hung on.

Until the thirty-eighth lap the race was a series of contests between the four leaders and ambitious members of the pack. Now a lone rider would spurt out front and try to open a safe gap between himself and the field. He was always relentlessly pulled back. Now a trio or quartette would try it out together—with the same result. Two laps to go, all challengers had been baffled and the favourites were getting ready to make their respective races.

Eddie saw Hall hustle to the lead at the bell and take up an obstructive position in front of Holmes. Walker, another cyclist, simultaneously went alongside him and McIntosh and Maitland closed in on his remaining flank and rear. The box was assembled and sealed before they had reached the half-lap.

High on the bank, outside, Lecky poised ready to swoop to the front. Poor old Robinson was a good thirty yards behind the rest of the field.

Nobody could tell in detail afterwards exactly how it all happened, but right here calamity struck. Holmes apparently got wise to what had happened for, usually a clean rider, he swerved right and bounced Walker. Walker wobbled to give him a clear lane through, but before he could seize it they collided heavily a second time. Each careering off obligingly, crashing into fellow-riders. In a twinkling every member of the pack was spread out on the track.

All, that is, save Robinson. Coming up well after the spill, the old man was able to pick his way almost daintily through the mass of fallen riders and get quickly into the clear. He crossed the line first in a silence so vast his wheels could almost be heard swashing over the hard clay of the track.

While the loud-speaker blared that Robinson had paid the astounding pool of eighty-five pounds to win, Eddie went dazedly to find Hazel. Well, he reflected bitterly, I became a party to a dirty racket to try get out of this trouble, and fate's stepped in to show that dirt's never justified at any stage. Even with what's coming day after Boxing Day I'd feel a lot better if I hadn't tried to cash in on the Lecky business.

Hazel was smiling expectantly. 'Bought a Robinson?' she teased. 'You've been gone so long you must have been up to something.'

'I was,' Eddie was shamefaced, although Hazel could know nothing. 'But it didn't work.' He put his hand in his pocket and handed her the little stack of tickets. 'Bought five on Lecky but he went down with the rest.'

Hazel took a look and then her eyes went round. 'Lecky?' she asked, pointing to the topmost of the tickets. 'Lecky? The four bottom tickets are Lecky, but look at the top one, Eddie!'

Eddie looked. The top ticket was the one he had bought just after the big punter bounced him and called for Holmes and Harris and Robinson.

It was not marked Lecky, as he had instructed, calling right after the big man's last call. It was marked ROBINSON.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

GEORGE CAMPBELL is thirty. He was born in Jamaica and educated at St. George's College, Jamaica. Formerly a reporter on the staff of *The Daily Gleaner*, he published *First Poems* in 1946. He now works in stage circles in New York.

CLAUDE THOMPSON was born 2nd January, 1907, in Spanish Town, Jamaica. He was educated at Wolmer's Boys' School, Jamaica. Has published short stories at home and abroad. His first book, *These My People*, was published in 1942. He has in manuscript *This is Jamaica*, a descriptive book of Jamaica.

VICTOR STAFFORD REID, on the staff of *The Daily Gleaner*, is the author of a novel, *New Day*, chapters from which were printed in our number for March, 1948.

W. G. OGILVIE was born at Bohio, Panama, on the Canal Zone. His birthplace is now at the bottom of Gatun Lake. His father was a physician and surgeon, his mother a teacher in Jamaica and at City College, New York. He writes: 'I try to make both ends come distantly in sight of meeting by school-teaching. I have published short stories, written radio-plays, and had one play, *One Soja Man*, successfully produced.

RUDOLPH LEIGHTON COLLINGWOOD AARONS was born 5th April, 1905, in Port Antonio, Jamaica. Educated Titchfield School. Visited England and Europe, 1935. A frequent contributor to the local Press, he published a volume of stories in 1944, of which many have been broadcast.

WYCLIFFE SAMUEL BENNETT was born in Colon, Panama, 19th May, 1923. Educated in Jamaica and entered the Civil Service (Department of Customs and Excise). Became Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the Poetry League of Jamaica in succession to the founder, Mr. J. E. Clare McFarlane, O.B.E., F.R.S.A., when the latter was elected President in 1945.

WALTER ADOLPHE ROBERTS, the well-known novelist, historian, and poet, is also a Vice-President of the Poetry League of Jamaica.

KENNETH BRIAN SCOTT was born 12th October, 1914. He was educated Rusca School, Hanover (Jamaica), and Kingston College. He has been writing poetry for the past three years.

VIVIAN LANCASTER VIRTUE was born 13th November, 1911, Jamaica. Educated Kingston College. He is the author of *Wings of the Morning*, published 1935. Visited the United Kingdom, 1946.

MICKY HENDRIKS was born 17th April, 1922, in Jamaica. He was educated at Jamaica College, Jamaica, and Ottershaw College, Surrey, England. An amateur actor and producer, he has been writing poetry for the past three years.

GERALD ATTERBURY HAMILTON was born 1910, St. Ann, Jamaica, and educated at Beckford and Smith's School, Spanish Town. He has been writing poetry for the past fifteen years.

BASIL MCFARLANE was born 23rd April, 1922, in Jamaica. He was educated at Jamaica College and Calabar College, Jamaica. In 1944 he joined the R.A.F. and served in England. Has been writing poetry for the past three years.

CALVIN ASCOT BOWEN was born 10th November, 1915, at Oracabessa, St. Mary, Jamaica. He was educated at St. George's College, Kingston. A reporter on the staff of *The Daily Gleaner*, he also writes short stories and poems.

KENNETH INGRAM, aged 27, is librarian in the West Indian Reference Library of the Institute of Jamaica. He studied in England, 1944-47, has contributed to the local weekly press and to Mrs. Manly's anthology, *Focus*.

PERCY L. MILLER, author of many short stories, is Literary Editor for Jamaica of *The Caribbean Post*.



# CINEMA

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## JAMAICA PROBLEM. 'THIS MODERN AGE,' No. 2.

ON the whole, this film may be welcomed. It marks a great step forward from such hackwork as the Lowell Thomas travelogue, *Memories of Columbus*, which I recently came on in London. That never even got right the name of San Domingo, which it dealt with, and showed far more of Trujillo's daughter at leisure than of the inhabitants at work. *Jamaica Problem* does attempt to give something of the real, as opposed to the tourists', Jamaica.

It is, I think, honest, serious, and, as far as it goes, sincere. But it does not go very far. In fact, it scarcely gets started. That seemed to me because it consists mainly of a series of false starts. It never 'sets' the island firmly before us as an entity—shots of Montego Bay are mixed up with scenes of Kingston, and no attempt is made to explain the different characteristics of different towns or districts. I had the feeling that so much material was shot that, when it came to editing, all that could be done, or all that was done, was to arrange the pieces to expound a thesis there hadn't been time to develop.

I take it that this thesis was that things are in a pretty bad way in Jamaica, and that something must be done. But one of the things that is done is to blame the Jamaicans for being emotional, and that, I imagine, was hardly the intention of the film. But later on I'll go into that.

The film shows the poverty of Kingston slums. It contrasts them with the life of the rich. But it doesn't show the strata between. It shows neither the worst conditions, nor the best of the steps that are being taken to overcome them. In many respects, instead of making things clear, it confuses. For instance, the commentary will talk of pocomania, and then the film shows us Maroons. There is no suggestion that these were the people who turned against the African and that they live now separate from the rest of the inhabitants. Instead, it is implied that all Jamaicans are too emotional.

Time and again this point is made. Personally, I wonder

they aren't more so. If my great-grandparents had been taken from their homes, transported miles in wretched conditions and set to work in an alien land under the whip, I should feel emotional. I should feel emotional if, as a reporter, I was told by the manager of the hotel that I must call at the back door, not the main desk, for information on visitors, who might be offended at the spectacle of a coloured man at home in his own island. This last has been altered now, but past insults breed present rancour, and you don't remove rancour by telling people not to be emotional. Instead, you are much more likely to show you can't face your own emotions yourself.

This always seems to me a typically British attitude to the West Indies, as is also the rather weary reiteration 'God helps those who help themselves' (help themselves *first*, should it be?). I am sorry that the makers of this film should have fallen for it, having been otherwise refreshingly constructive in their approach.

I should also have liked something more to have been made of the work of the Institute of Jamaica which runs alertly administered museum, junior section, lecture room, art gallery, and a library which in 1945-46 sent out 24,601 books to centres in the island, and had a lending issue of 188,490 volumes.

Surely, here is an instance of people helping themselves, without being 'emotional'—and without, either, much financial backing, home authorities please note.

ROBERT HERRING

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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CARIBBEAN. SEA OF THE NEW WORLD. Germán Arcineigas. Cassell, London, 1948. 21s.; Knopf, New York, 1947. \$3.75. DEMOCRACY AND EMPIRE IN THE CARIBBEAN. PAUL BLANSHARD. Macmillan, New York, 1947. \$5. ANGRY MEN, LAUGHING MEN; THE CARIBBEAN CALDRON. WENZELL BROWN. Greenberg, New York, \$3.50. LANDS OF THE INNER SEA. W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS. Coward-McCann Inc., New York. \$4.

THE British tend to think of the West Indies in terms of national heroes, pirates, planters; the abolition of slavery, what they conceive of as gradual democracy; friendly cricket-matches and ungrateful strikes, with the coloured man on the whole glad to be a member of the Empire. Other nations have other views and it comes as somewhat of a shock to us to find they do not share our own.

Americans, in particular, are apt to regard the West Indies as part of America. Thus Paul Blanshard refers to Barbados as 'the most British colony in America', and Señor Arcineigas makes quite clear that he does not think we ought to be there—or, almost, anywhere. Moreover, the proximity of the islands to the American continent attracts many visitors who have never been to Europe. For these such an island as Jamaica is their first meeting with British customs, and very strange they appear to find them.

It is good, therefore, for English readers to approach the West Indies occasionally, at any rate, from another angle, and to realize that in many eyes our 'possessions', and those of the Dutch, represent imperialism in a hemisphere of republics. Of these books, the most free from malice or envy and the most serious in its attempt to survey modern problems is Paul Blanshard's. Señor Arcineigas' book of 464 pages is a vast work in which he sets out to cover not only the history of the Caribbean from the days of early discoverers, but also the history of all the countries concerned in these discoveries. This, it will be agreed, is quite an undertaking—the history of four hundred odd years of the Caribbean alone, not to

mention what amounts to a general history of most of Europe as well for even longer than that. Señor Arcineigas is a Colombian, Minister of National Education and editor of the *Revista de America*. His industry, as witness this book alone, is enormous; his research vast, and his scholarship considerable. But his English, or at any rate that of the translation, is of a vulgarity which comes near to nullifying the value of his work. It varies from such purple patches as 'The spirit of Christopher the Frustrated did not frequent those humble paths of the heart where good companions foregather in the pleasant shade of friendship' to such nonsensical imagery as the statement that Joséphine 'bore a hammock in her soul'. He tells us of Drake's return to Plymouth that 'the pirate's beard gleamed like a ruby and his eyes flashed with the sparks struck from the flints of his victories', and his lust for pretentious melodrama leads him to such a farrago as 'Heroes are like bits of flotsam that the tides of the nations lift out of the void, raise to the clouds and then engulf once more with dizzying rapidity'. Equally, of course, it could be said that nations are like bits of flotsam that the tides of heroes lift out of the void . . . but that is not the way to say anything. And Señor Arcineigas uses this way for close on five hundred pages.

It is after this a relief to turn to the comparative dignity of Paul Blanshard. Whereas Señor Arcineigas ends his book with the beginning of the twentieth century, Mr. Blanshard takes for his the study in all the islands of contemporary problems. Almost entirely political, it deals with the issues of imperialism and democracy. He gives first an overall picture, then treats of the British Empire in the Caribbean, of French possessions, what he calls 'Netherlands America' and devotes a section to the republics of Cuba, Haiti, and San Domingo, contrasting and comparing throughout. He is, on the whole fair, though when he complains that there were only 109 students from all the West Indies at British Universities in 1943, I think he might have remembered that was a war-year. His book is full of soberly presented but startling facts; Princess Juliana once flew over one of the Dutch islands, cast down some flowers and a message 'while the little black schoolchildren lined up in tribute and sang Dutch songs—

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BERTRAND RUSSELL. "There is not an essay without its good things, not a page which does not provoke argument or thought."—*Sunday Times*. "A book full of rich, stimulative thought, with plenty of scope for disagreement."—*Manchester Guardian*. *4th impression. 8s. 6d. net*

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in English'. He tells us that out of the population of 48,000 in Dominica, only 110 are British; he reminds us that *The Times* deplored the defeat of Manley as 'a political disaster' and that Bustamante, whose real name is Clarke, by virtue of an Irish father passed as white in America, where he worked as a waiter, to return to Jamaica as a money-lender. Most rewarding of all, perhaps, is he on Barbados, where, with a population of 1,200 to the square mile, the estate-system operates on 50,000 of the precious acres. 'Less than 20,000 acres are cultivated by small land-holders. Not more than 600 of the 1,900 small holdings are more than 4 acres,' and less than 2 per cent of the population receive 30 per cent of the national income, the wages for farm-labourers being about 86 dollars, or a little over £20 a year.

With Mr. Wenzell Brown, we are back to a familiar example of book-making—the semi-political quick-fire journalist-guide. Mr. Brown goes in for 'impressions', of the kind known as 'vivid'. Here is one of Kingston—'at night there are only a few flickering lights and it is as though one roamed through a blacked-out city.' 'The balconies that jut out over the sidewalks cut out even the light of the moon and the stars.' 'All the shops and offices close in Kingston at three o'clock in the afternoon.' All wrong, to my knowledge.

Mr. Brown found Jamaican English hard to understand, and in Trinidad could meet 'no single Englishman or woman but who defended the law'—of flogging. Indeed 'their faces became masks of evil'. On the other hand 'the tension which might have sprung from the thousands of young men (Americans) who were suddenly dumped into Trinidad and began to compete with the natives for the choicest among the pretty girls was relieved by the good nature of the Calypsos'. Hooley! Has he never heard of *Brown Skin Girl*, to name one of the mildest? This book is as bad as R. W. Thompson's *Black Caribbean*, and almost as exhibitionistic.

Mr. Adolphe Roberts' book is a guide-book pure and pleasantly simple. As travel becomes easier and the West Indies are more and more in the public eye, there will be room for a modern and comprehensive guide. But it will have to be better written than this. The author is full of circumlocutions,



## *Books for April*

### JOHN BROPHY'S *lively and stimulating discussion* **BODY AND SOUL**

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strange words such as 'obligated', 'locale' for 'place', 'elevation' for 'height' and 'constitutes' for 'makes, forms' or simply 'is'. He will write 'An ardent absorption in the scene possessed me' and when he observes that he 'needed to hoard my transportation time', he even manages to say the opposite of what he means, which I take to be that he didn't want to waste time on journeys. The clue here would be misuse of the word 'hoard' for 'save'. Mr. Roberts lives in the United States and his book is written for the American tourist; but he was born a Jamaican and it is curious to see how completely he has absorbed American standards as well as tricks of speech, so that he seems un-at-home when he comes to British islands, even to his own Jamaica.

ROBERT HERRING

THE LOST ANT (HOMIGA PERDIDA). MIRIAM BLANCO-FOMBONA. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.

IN the eighteenth century a peasant, as Rousseau did not fail to point out, had only to go to a town in his own country to be perverted. But now Miss Miriam Blanco-Fombona, in her first novel *The Lost Ant*, has to go farther to find a genuine peasant and has to uproot him far more violently to get a stimulating contrast between the natural and the civilized man. She discovers, in fact, a peon in the most remote of villages, beside the Andes, and she pitchforks him and his family into Grosvenor Square, diplomatic society, and the frigid embraces of the English upper classes. The moral has also, with the passage of time, become rather more difficult to make out. On the one hand it is difficult to experience any richness of sensation in London, even when settling oneself to sleep, with cold sheets and hot-water bottles, instead of what our peon longed for, 'to feel the warm stickiness of dried sweat,' while by contrast a visit to South America is enough to make the peon's daughter, calculating and conventional in England, blossom out, grow twice as beautiful, and take a lover. But on the other hand, and this does not seem to be at all the same point, it is a drawback to civilization that it makes one lose one's faith; in England since 'nobody who is anybody is a Roman Catholic', the peon's daughter has to be received



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into the Church of England before she can marry a lord, and the natural reaction against this sort of thing, by the peon's grand-daughter, is to take the veil and go into a convent in South America.

The theme, in itself, is not promising, and it must be admitted that it is worked out with some naivety; in the process of asking whether the English are human, and expecting the answer 'No', the authoress has rather naturally failed to make them so. But in point of fact, it is just this simplicity of outlook, and the intensity of feeling which goes with it, that makes the book. The theme and the moral boil down to simple nostalgia—perhaps they were really no more than a very elaborate disguise for this emotion, even when they were first handled in the distant past—and the writer has certainly expressed her own evident sickness, and that of her principal character, both convincingly and sincerely to the point where the reader is very pleased to be infected with it. It would, indeed, one feels, be very awful for a peon from the Andes to have to live with a staff of English servants in Grosvenor Square, and Miss Blanco-Fombona's sympathy with his plight has certainly made him a charming figure.

HUGH BRADENHAM

LYDIA SUMMERS. L. STENI. Falcon Press. 7s. 6d.

So many novels are ineffective because otherwise inspired authors have failed to give enough thought to problems of construction; so many historical novels are ineffective because uninspired authors have given too much thought to mechanics. The cup of chocolate is brought in, at just the right moment by a footman in powdered wig, so that it can be removed, untasted, as the last line of a chapter (Mr. Steni, end of Chapter 3). *Lydia Summers*, then, is a shade too crafty; although, with more inspiration, one would have been grateful for the craftsmanship.

The story is a gaily coloured melodrama of one hundred and thirty odd pages. An eighteenth-century 'lady' steals the boy friend of an influential Spanish nobleman, and flies from the wrath she has incurred to Santa Barbara. On the island she wins the Governor's favour, and thereby infuriates the locals,



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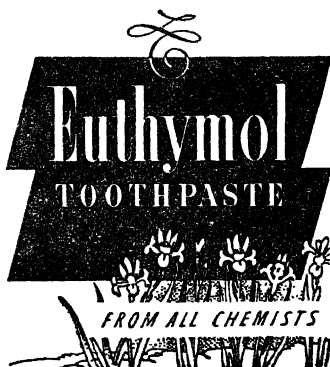
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BIRDS AND I. LESLIE BROWN. Michael Joseph. 15s.

It is a solemn thought that birds can be a man's life. Mr. Brown, for instance, remarks quite irritably that at one period he was 'violently in love' and this unfortunate circumstance interfered with his bird photography. On the other hand, it must be admitted that birds have given Mr. Brown a varied and exciting time. In the caves of Trinidad the author found oil birds which live entirely in darkness, and in Nigeria he saw pratincoles perform the prettiest 'broken wing' trick in the bird repertoire. Moreover, Mr. Brown can write with appreciation for the moments of beauty, for the hour when the scarlet ibis come home over the swamp water and settle on a mangrove so that the whole tree looks as if it were a mass of scarlet blossoms. In all, this is a top flight in bird books with superb photographs.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

BOLIVAR; THE LIFE OF AN IDEALIST. EMIL LUDWIG.  
W. H. Allen. 17s. 6d.

'In studying any work of genius we should begin by taking it absolutely; that is to say, with minds intent on discovering just what the author's mind intended.' . . . In this case the author of a work of genius is Bolivar; the freedom of Latin America is the work, i.e. the goal of Ludwig's Bolivar.

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must have a complete understanding and grasp of the situation. It is here that Ludwig fails. His teutonic mentality seems unable to analyse the Latin mind. Its elusiveness and niceties elude him. Bolivar escapes him and the man he depicts is a somewhat ludicrous hero making a pathetic attempt to achieve immortality.

*Bolivar, the Life of an Idealist* does not pretend to be based on new material. It is an account of Bolivar's life. It is also an interpretation of Bolivar mainly in the light of his letters and certain well-known documents. Hence it brings nothing new in the field of scholarship. As an interpretation of Bolivar's life Ludwig joins a long list of well-known authors of many nationalities who up till now have failed to give the ordinary reader a sound and well-balanced picture of the man who altered the whole course of history in America.

Ludwig splits Bolivar's life into five well-defined periods: the Dandy, the Ordeal, the Liberator, the Dictator, and the Don Quixote period. So far so good. But what have we got beyond this? For the ordinary reader we have an account of a man called Simon Bolivar, born in Caracas, Venezuela, on 24th July, 1783. This scion of American aristocracy is described as a rather neurotic boy brought up by his extraordinary teacher, Rodriguez, to be the perfect prototype of Rousseau's Emile. Bolivar grows up and is sent to finish off his schooling in Madrid. There follow the vain empty life of the young dandy, ending up with his brief idyllic marriage and the tragic death of the young bride. At the age of twenty Bolivar had 'lived his life'.

And since 'ripeness is all' it still remained for Bolivar to while away his life as an idler till Napoleon's invasion of Spain launched the South American revolt. Without Bolivar the revolt would have faded into nothing for it was his genius, his irreplaceable genius, which made a success of repeated failure. Bolivar was the perfect example of the romantic man of action who is also a realist, and he was also convinced that unsurmountable difficulties could be overcome but by himself alone. It was his genius that he achieved the impossible.

Why then was Bolivar rejected at the end? Ludwig fails to give us an answer. But perhaps it was the fact that the people

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had not wanted independence. The revolution was the work of the educated Creoles. And it was the educated Creoles who had been the first and the greatest sufferers. At the end of his life Bolivar's great dream was shattered. Yet the ill-conceived and little-understood hero of Ludwig's book is a poor picture to present to an English public. The reader does not really care if Ludwig's Bolivar lived in vain. But Bolivar had altered the whole course of history, hence it is important for the English reader to know the real Bolivar. He can do nothing better than forget this unfortunate caricature and turn to one of the best-balanced books on Simon Bolivar in the English language: Professor Trend's *Bolivar and the Independence of Spanish America*. For in Trend's own words Bolivar's work is proof of his immortality: 'Bolivar's work ended in ruins: but his ideal is still there, and the achievement of the Spanish and Portuguese Americas is one of the great facts of modern history. They are among the few peoples in the world to-day whose belief in the future has not been shaken, and whose ideals—however Utopian they may have appeared in the time of the Liberator—are now plans which can and may be put into practice, even though they may not take the form of the close political union intended by Bolivar himself.' For as Bolivar said: 'There have been three great fools in history: Jesus, Don Quixote, and I.'

MIRIAM BLANCO-FOMBONA



# BOOKS ON JAMAICA

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(The following titles are drawn from my West Indian collection, collected for me by Messrs. Maggs Brothers. While the list does not claim to be complete it is, I think, fairly representative. I shall be glad to know of omissions.—R. H.)

*Ton Cringle's Log.*

*A Voyage to Jamaica.* Sir Hans Sloane. 1707.

Volume 2 of the above. 1725.

*Letters to Jane from Jamaica.* 1788–96. Mosley. West India Committee.

*A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica* (in 2 volumes). William Beckford.<sup>1</sup> 1790. T. and J. Egerton.

*A Tour Through British West Indies in 1802 and 1803.* Daniel McKinnen. 1804. J. White.

*History of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (in 3 volumes). Bryan Edwards. 1807. John Stockdale.

*Jamaica and its Inhabitants.* Gertler. 1808. Longman.

*A Tour Through Jamaica.* Williams. 1826. Hunt and Clarke.

*The Annals of Jamaica* (in 2 volumes). Rev. G. W. Bridges. 1828. John Murray.

*Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative.* Edited by Jane Porter. 1831. Longman.

*Journal of a West Indian Landed Proprietor.* Monk Lewis. 1834.

*Journal in Jamaica.* Caudler. 1840. Harvey and Darton.

*Jamaica; Past and Present.* J. H. Phillips. 1843. John Snow.

*Birds of Jamaica.* Gosse. 1847. John van Voorst.

*A Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica.* Gosse. 1851. Longman.

*The West Indies in 1857.* J. and J. Harvey. 1857.

*The English in the West Indies.* James Anthony Froude. 1888. Longman.

*Equatorial Forests and Jamaica Revisited.* Villiers Stuart. 1891. John Murray.

*Cruising Among the Caribees.* Stoddard. 1895. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner.

*The West Indies.* Manington. 1925. Leonard Parsons.

*Jamaican Negro Proverbs and Sayings.* Collected by Izett Anderson and Frank Cundall. 1927. Institute of Jamaica.

<sup>1</sup> The historian, died 1799; not to be confused with the author of *Vathek*.

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- Black Roadways: a study of Jamaican Folk Lore.* Martha Warner Beckwith. 1929. University of North Carolina Press.
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- Governors of Jamaica in the Seventeenth Century.* Cundall. 1936. West India Committee.
- Jamaica, the Blessed Island.* Lord Olivier. 1936. London.
- Governors of Jamaica in the Eighteenth Century.* Cundall. 1937. West India Committee.
- Waters of the West.* Kenneth Pringle. 1938. London.
- Aborigines of Jamaica.* P. M. Sherlock. 1939. Institute of Jamaica.
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# EDITORIAL

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*May, 1948*

**T**wo, among other, reasons why I should always be sorry were it proved that Bacon wrote Shakespeare are that he was not born on St. George's Day which, given a good year, is the heart of an English spring, and he did not live at Stratford-on-Avon. I know of nowhere sweeter than Stratford-on-Avon in spring, whether one is walking the gardens of New Place, bright with tulips, forget-me-nots, and heady with the perfume of lilac, wallflower, and stocks; sitting among the 'harlotry players' on the Avon-facing terrace of 'The Dirty Duck'; or strolling back from the theatre, past Jaggard's bookshop, under full moon.

Each return brings surprises—not all of them good—and each year adds new pleasures to those ever cherished and always found waiting. I shall recount all that I found, but the sum total will be the same: so much that is English happens at Stratford-on-Avon, to be met nowhere else. Where else in this island can one, as one dines, see through the window a cart draw up with boughs of blossom, which are affixed to a shop-front (another had an archway of yellow tulips round its door)? Where else, save at Shottery, would an old lady, leaning over the gate of her blossom-gay garden, greet one, a stranger, with 'Lovely day for The Birthday'? Where else are people still friendly and beautifully-mannered? One is not barked at or pushed, and when people speak, they take the trouble to open their mouths and make words, not merely inarticulate noises. It is, indeed, in this respect like going to a foreign country to go to Stratford-on-Avon, even if that country be only Arden, the England that was. There are those in that town, as we know, who are 'awkward', as we say in the North. But the ordinary people (so many of whom have a Welsh accent) are considerate and kind, so that one comes to think that the epithet applied to Shakespeare, 'gentle' Shakespeare, is a Stratford attribute.

This year, the wistaria on Hall's Croft was, oddly, not so

advanced as I had seen it at this time of year; but I found fennel in Anne Hathaway's orchard, which I had not done before, and I made my first visit to the Grammar School. They go too far, I think, in claiming the desk-tops to be Tudor but one thing for which too much cannot be said is that this school has been in constant use since 1428. There were twenty-four students in Shakespeare's day. Now there are two hundred and forty, and I liked somehow, though I should never have thought I would, the enterprise revealed on the Modern Side, at the back, where the boys had spent some of their summer holiday in building an observatory.

However, I have, alack, only three pages, and as I was up for 'The' Birthday, to that let us turn—and how willingly when, from windows overlooking trees in New Place, one descends to be offered rosemary tied with his colours, and find in the shops nosegays of the flowers that he loved. I knew I should use that last word sooner or later. It is the *love* that is so powerful at Stratford, the love of which 'gentle Shakespeare' was so beloved an expounder. One may admire others, and certainly it is a waste, when ground is given, to withhold admiration. But the quality of the pleasure and the worth of the inspiration which Shakespeare gives is such that no other has offered to the world using English. It is love, pure and still graciously simple, which causes them to lay flowers on his tomb and, however many Ambassadors (the Soviet not among them this year, through 'pressure of duties') and Distinguished Visitors there may be in procession, all—children, yokels in leggings, soldiers on leave—can and do break in at any point on the route and join with their offerings of bluebell, rosemary, flowers of all kinds, the lily being one; received by a smiling vicar, to be laid all together in one large, shining cross on that stone whose inscription so typically begins 'Good frend'.

There were innovations this year; the procession was in the afternoon, and we went through the Birthplace, out through the garden. It was the longest procession they have had, and the first time the flag of Pakistan flew (I thought the Swiss one ungratefully placed). The Birthday play was also a first night, and two actors alternated in the role of Hamlet. A less

welcome innovation is that *Hamlet* itself was given on the Friday night and at both performances on the Saturday. This effectually debarred week-end visitors from seeing more than one play, which I think a mistake. It used to be possible to go up for a week-end and see three or, if you stayed a week, to see eight. Not so now. The choice of plays I considered unenterprising—*Hamlets* are redundant of late, and it scarcely seems useful to have more than one *Shrew* in any part of England at once. But the theatre at Stratford takes a view of its function different from the rest of the world and better men than myself have failed to shake its complacency.

I deplore also Professor Dover Wilson introducing politics into his speech at the Birthday luncheon, and the closing of the theatre museum for a conference on Saturday morning, the one time when most visitors would have wanted, and had a right to, admission. The other museums seemed to me in excellent condition, and the guides were exemplary; unobtrusive but helpful and dignified. Many of the 'jokes' which used to disfigure their discourse are shorn and one is offered now plain, well-stated information succinctly delivered.

It remains to add that in the speeches on the first night of *Hamlet*, everyone was so busy congratulating each other that Shakespeare, who provided the play, was not mentioned.

\* \* \*

We are happy to be enabled to print in this issue a chapter from Dr. Edith Sitwell's forthcoming book on Shakespeare, and would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the universities of Leeds and Durham on the recognition they have accorded her in the two Doctorates of Letters she received from them in May and June respectively.

# OF THE CLOWNS AND FOOLS OF SHAKESPEARE

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DR. EDITH SITWELL

'MUSIC,' said Wagner, 'blots out an entire civilization, as sunshine does lamplight.'

This is true of the giant harmonies of Shakespeare. In another kind, his poetry is a sun whose light does not blot out a civilization, but fuses it into a single being.

In the Comedies, the Sun forgives and remakes the shape of evil, dances, laughing and loving the world, over stupidity.

We see the nettle-dull Dogberry and Verges. Shakespeare reduces their sheer nonsense, their incomprehension and rustic fears, into Chaos; and then from Chaos he produces a dancing star.

When Dogberry inquires (at the beginning of the Third Scene of the Fourth Act of *Much Ado About Nothing*):

'Is our whole dissembly appeared?'

or says—

'Write down that they serve God: and write God first; for God defend but that God should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly,' iv, ii. Or when Bottom the Weaver declares that the ballad about his dream 'shall be called "Bottom's Dream", because it hath no bottom' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, iv, i), we feel as if we were 'suddenly made conscious of a deformation undergone by all bodies carried forward by the earth's motion', or, going still further, had found ourselves in 'a universe reigned over by any deformation whatsoever—in accordance with any laws, as complicated as we liked'—'these laws ruling over our bodies also, and the rays of light emanating from the different objects.' \*1

Outraged by being called 'an Asse', Dogberry cries: 'Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my yeeres? O that hee were here to write me downe an asse! But, masters, remember that I am an asse; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an asse' (*Much Ado About Nothing*, iv, iii). And from the word 'yeeres' we see the long ears of the Ass growing.

('O Dionysus divine, why dost thou pull mine ears?' Ariadne asks her philosophical lover in one of the celebrated dialogues on the Isle of Naexos (Nietzsche). 'I find there is something agreeable, something pleasant about thine ears. . . . Why are they not still longer?'\*)

We are, in short, in the Fourth Dimension—'offering itself to the intellect from the plastic point of view—the immensity of space eternalizing itself in all directions at a determined moment. It is space itself, the dimensions of the infinite; it is this which endows objects with plasticity.\*3 It gives them, in a word, the proportions they desire.'

Sometimes, amid the Titanic dust, the Titan heat—a strange figure is thrown, that of the ancestor of Ancient Pistol and the Capitano of Italian Comedy. This shadow has drifted down the ages to us, escaped from the campaigns of Alexander—retaining still his bluster, his tragic bombast, and with his tremendous crest of plumes (or 'boastard's feathers, as an enemy,\*4 Dikaiopolis, called that crest), still erect on his helmet.

This being turns towards us, and we see, under the crest of feather that is the mark of the soldier of fortune, a stock mask of Comedy, with empty eyes and open mouth—and through\*5 these apertures, gain a glimpse of the face of Aeschylus. Sometimes, again, some being turns, and we see, not the 'Silenus-like figure and countenance, with its prominent eyes and snub nose',\*6 of the true Socrates, but the lean black shadow, with hooked nose, the pretended Comedy Mask of the philosopher,\*7 affixed to the stock figure of the learned Doctor, ancestor of Il Dottore in Italian Comedy, and of the schoolmaster Holofernes, 'to whom, with his friend the Parson, Sir Nathaniel Goodman, Dull, the Constable, plays buffoon.'\*8

These faces, that of Aeschylus and of Socrates, as they were seen by Aristophanes, strangely wried by the Comedy masks into which they were thrust, are seen by us for a moment, brought into fresh life by the greatest of all human creators. Then the Titanic dust of all the summers that have passed since their birth, drifts round them again: and the high voice of the Clown is heard—the Ritual Laughter.

### THE RITUAL LAUGHTER

There are various kinds of the greater Laughter—of the Ritual or Sacred Laugh. We may study the nature of these in Salamon Reinach's *Cultes, Mythes, et Religions*.

There is the laughter inspiring fear—the braying of the world of asses following Darius, which, causing terror (because of the unknown, uncouth quality of the sounds) among the horses of the Scythian hordes, who heard it for the first time, led to the flight of the horses and the defeat of the Scythians.—There is the laughter of those who have escaped from an earthquake and find themselves in known fields.—There is the laughter which represents the return to life of the Goddess of Vegetation.—And there is the pure laughter of the God, the manifestation in sound of his presence.

'It was said,' wrote Reinach, 'that Caligula wished to transport to Rome the Zeus of Phidias, from the Olympia: the scaffoldings, the machinery, were already erected, when the statute broke into loud laughter, so that the terrified workmen took to flight. This laughter of Zeus was caused by the attempted sacrilege of Caligula . . . but it was the solemn affirmation, the manifestation in sound, of the presence of the God.' \*9

The terrible laughter of Hamlet seems akin to that of the young Men during the Rites of the Roman Lupercalia, who, after they had been sacrificed by proxy, were obliged, as a part of the ceremony, to break into laughter, to show that their sacrifice was completed, and that they had passed beyond death.

It is this laughter that we hear, perhaps, in certain of Hamlet's speeches.



Sometimes the laughter of Hamlet is of this kind—sometimes of the sort of which Baudelaire wrote in *Curiosités Esthétiques*: 'Il est certain . . . que le rire humain est intimement lié à l'accident d'une chute ancienne, d'une dégradation physique et morale. Le rire et la douleur s'expriment par les organes où résident le commencement et la science du bien ou du mal: les yeux et la bouche. Dans le paradis terrestre . . . (c'est à dire dans le milieu où il semblait à l'homme que toutes les choses créées étaient bonnes), la joie n'était pas dans le rire. Aucune peine ne l'affligeait, son visage était simple et uni, et le rire qui agite maintenant les nations ne déformait pas les traits de sa face. . . . L'Etre qui voulut multiplier son image, n'a point mis dans la bouche de l'homme les dents du lion, mais l'homme mord avec le rire.'

\* \* \*

'Le rire est . . . essentiellement contradictoire, c'est à dire qu'il est, à la fois signe d'une grandeur infinie et d'une misère infinie, misère infinie relativement aux animaux. C'est du choc perpétuel de ces deux infinis qui se dégage le rire.'

Then, too, there is the grosser, more earthy laughter:  
 . . . 'broad as ten thousand beeves at pasture,  
 Thunders of laughter, clearing air and heart.'

The laughter of fertility at the thought of unfertility, the laughter of life and growth arising out of the earth that hides the dead.

And over and through the laughter sounds the 'tuneful planetting of the verse'.

\* \* \*

#### FOOLERY LIKE THE SUN

'Foolery, sir, doth walke about the Orbe like the Sunne; it shines every where,' said Feste.

And all the characters of the Fools have 'dimensions that are half-way between those of an atom and those of a star'.

When John Ray, the great seventeenth-century naturalist, was asked, 'What is the use of butterflies?' he replied, 'To adorn the world and delight the eyes of men, to brighten the

countryside, serving like so many golden spangles, to decorate the fields.' And he added, 'Who can contemplate their exquisite beauty and not acknowledge and adore the traces of divine art upon them?'

The Watteau Gilles, Pierrot, is of this kind . . . ('Je vécus, étincelle d'or de la lumière nature') . . . a simple creature, adorning the world, and soon to die. The Fool in King Lear was once such a being, before the coming of the rain. . . .

It was Coleridge's opinion (reported by Crabbe Robinson) that the Fools of Shakespeare supplied the place of the Ancient Chorus. . . . 'In Hamlet,' he added, 'the Fool, as it were, is divided into several parts, dispersed through the play. . . .'

The ancient wisdom, disguised as laughter, dances like the light of a great summer sea. So it was with Feste. Or it rises, in rustic disguise, like some bearded god of the ripe fig trees, from the very earth of Death.

'I wish you all joy of the Worme.'

(*Antony and Cleopatra*, v, ii.)

Or it turns black and terrible, as if lightning-struck, as in *Hamlet*.

*First Clown*: Come, my Spade: there is no ancient Gentlemen but Gardiners, Ditchers, and Grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

\* \* \*

What is he that builds stronger than either the Mason, the Shipwright, or the Carpenter?

\* \* \*

A Grave-maker; the Houses that he makes last till Doomesday.

(*Hamlet*, v, i.)

Perhaps, here, we have 'the Dionysian wisdom of Tragedy wherein the gaps between man and man give way to an overwhelming feeling of Oneness which leads back to the heart of Nature'.<sup>\*10</sup>

Or again, we have the true man, the bearded satyr, shouting joyfully to his God.\*<sup>11</sup>

Such is Dromio of Syracuse, involving the comfort of his master, because he is pursued by Nature, by the Earth in the shape of a kitchen wench: 'No longer from head to foot, than from hippe to hippe: she is sphericall like a globe: I could find out Countries in her.'

\* \* \*

*Antipholus of Syracuse*: Where Spain?

*Dromio of Syracuse*: Faith, I saw it not: but I felt it in her breath.

*Antipholus of Syracuse*: Where America, the Indies?

*Dromio of Syracuse*: O, sir, upon her nose: all ore embellished with Rubies, Carbuncles, Sapphires, declining their rich Aspect to the hot breath of Spaine, who set whole Armadoes of Caracts to be ballast at her nose.

(*A Comedy of Errors*, III, ii.)

Round these beings, the air sparkles like a sea. And indeed, Dromio of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus seem like two strange sea-creatures, shining with the sea-jewellery. But they come alive as we watch them and listen to them.

'When I had taken up what I had supposed to be a fallen star,' wrote Dryden, in the Epistle Dedicatory to *The Spanish Friar*, 'I found I had been cozened with a jelly; nothing but a cold, dull mass, which glittered no longer than it was shooting; a dwarfish mass, dressed up in gigantic words.'

He spoke of the disappointment experienced when reading certain plays, which he had enjoyed upon the stage. But with Shakespeare, every shooting star remains a star, no matter whence it is seen.

Other clowns, such as poor Pompey, the bawd's tapster, in *Measure for Measure*, have a strange animal character—that of the beast of burden turned prophet or soothsayer.

Dr. Carl Jung, in *Psychology of the Unconscious*, speaks of legends in which 'the Horse acquires the significance of the Animal Unconscious, which appears domesticated and subjected to the will of Man'.

It is this 'Animal Unconscious' which speaks through the

lips of Pompey, when, all unknowing, he utters words which tell us of the great mercy of Christ. (Pompey, no doubt, raised a gale of laughter by his words to Mistress Overdene: 'Courage! there will be pittie taken on you; you, that have worne your eies almost out in the service, you will be considered.'

(*Measure for Measure*, I, ii.)

But there is a great truth, none the less. She was blind in her sinning. She and Pompey, like Claudio, had

' . . . but as offended in a dream'—

And, no doubt, the heavenly mercy will consider blindness, the little or no light, the offence in a dream.)

\* \* \*

The giant dances, and grandeur is the air, the climate, through which the storm of his footsteps sounds:

*Boy*: Do you not remember, a saw a Flea sticke upon Bardolph's Nose, and a said it was a Blacke Soul burning in Hell-fire?

*Bardolph*: Well, the fuel is gone that maintain'd that fire: That's all the Riches I got in his service.

(*King Henry V*, II, iii.)

And

*Falstaffe*: Doe thou amend thy Face, and Ile amend my Life: Thou art our Admirall, thou bearest the Lanterne in the Poope, but tis in the Nose of thee; thou art the Knight of the Burning Lampe.

*Bardolph*: Why, Sir John, my Face does you no harme.

*Falstaffe*: No, Ile be sworne; I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a Death's Head in a Memento Mori: I never see thy Face, but I think upon Hell-fire, and Dives that lived in Purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to vertue, I would sweare by thy Face; my oath should bee 'By this Fire, that's God's angel': but thou art altogether given over; and wert indeede, but for the Light in thy Face, the Sunne of utter Darknesse. When thou ran'st up Gad's Head in the Night to catch my Horse, if I did not thinke that thou

hadst beene an Ignis Fatuus or a Ball of Wild Fire, there's  
no Purchase in Mony.

(First Part of *King Henry IV*, III, iii.)

Gold is inherent in all natures. We see the buried, undreamt-  
of treasure in the smile of Gravity:

'He doth smile his face into more lines than are in the  
Indies,' said Maria of Malvolio.

NOTES

\*<sup>1</sup> Henri Poincaré : *Science and Method*.

\*<sup>2</sup> and \*<sup>3</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire : *Les Peintres Artistes*.

\*<sup>5</sup>, \*<sup>6</sup>, \*<sup>7</sup>, and \*<sup>8</sup>. See F. M. Cornford : *The Origin of Attic Comedy*.

\*<sup>9</sup> Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's Foreword to *All's Well that Ends Well*.  
Cambridge Edition Shakespeare.

\*<sup>10</sup> and \*<sup>11</sup> Nietzsche : *The Birth of Tragedy*.

# WHEN JAMES CAME TO THEOBALDS

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GEORGE EWART EVANS

A MODERN historian says: 'When James Sixth of Scotland and First of England moved from Holyrood to Whitehall in 1603 he was accompanied or followed by a crowd of courtiers and needy adventurers, the first trickle of the great stream of Scots who have since come across the Border to seek their fortunes.' The advance guard of the Scots must have enjoyed themselves whilst on their short stay at Theobalds near Waltham Cross, for James soon brought them back there. In 1606 Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, entertained both James and Christian the Fourth, King of Denmark. The visit lasted four days, and a description by one of the guests, Sir John Harrington, throws some light on the manner of the entertainment. The Scots had brought south with them a tradition of hard drinking, but neither the English nor the Danes wanted much schooling. The account is taken from one of Sir John's letters:

'In compliance with your asking, now shall you accept my poor account of rich doings. I came here a day or two before the Danish King came and from the day he did come until this hour, I have been well-nigh overwhelmed with carousal and sports of all kinds. The sports began each day in such manner and such sort as had well-nigh persuaded me of Mahomet's paradise. We had women, and indeed wine too, of such plenty as would have astonished each sober beholder. Our feasts were magnificent and the two royal guests did most lovingly embrace each other at table. I think the Dane has strangely wrought on our good English nobles; for those whom I never could get to taste good liquor now follow the fashion and wallow in beastly delights. The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication. In good sooth, the parliament did kindly to provide his Majesty so

seasonably with money, for there hath been no lack of good living; shows, sights and banquetings from morn to eve.

‘One day a great feast was held, and after dinner the representation of Solomon, his temple and the coming of the Queen of Sheba was made; or, I may better say, was meant to have been made before their majesties, by device of the Earl of Salisbury and others.—But alas! as all earthly things do fail to poor mortals in enjoyment, so did prove our presentment hercof. The lady who did play the queen’s part did carry most precious gifts to both their majesties, but, forgetting the steps arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesty’s lap, and fell at his feet, though I rather think it was in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion; cloths and napkins were at hand to make all clean. His Majesty then got up and would dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state; which was not a little defiled with the presents of the queen which had been bestowed on his garments; such as wine, cream, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters. The entertainment and show went forward and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down; wine did so occupy their upper chambers. Now did appear in rich dress, Faith, Hope and Charity: Hope did essay to speak but wine rendered her endeavours so feeble that she withdrew, and hoped the king would excuse her brevity: Faith was then alone, for I am certain she was not joined with good works, and left the Court in a staggering condition: Charity came to the king’s feet and seemed to cover the multitude of sins her sisters had committed; in some sort she made obeisance and brought gifts, but said she would return home again, as there was no gift which heaven had not already given His Majesty. She then returned to Faith and Hope, who were both sick in the lower hall. Next came Victory in bright armour and by a strange medley of versification did endeavour to make suit to the King. But Victory did not triumph long; after much lamentable utterance she was led away like a silly captive and laid to sleep in the outer steps of the antechamber. Now Peace did make entry and strive to get foremost to the King, but I

grieve to tell how great wrath she did discover unto those of her attendants; and, much contrary to her semblance, most rudely made war with her olive branch and laid on the pates of those who did oppose her coming.

'I have much marvelled at these strange pageantries, and they do bring to my remembrance what passed of this sort in our Queen's days; of which I was sometimes an humble presenter and assistant; but I did ne'er see such lack of good order discretion and sobriety, as I have now done.

'I have passed much time in seeing the royal sports of hunting and hawking where the manners were such as made me devise the beasts were pursuing the sober creation, and not man in quest of exercise or food. I will now in good sooth declare to you, who will not blab, that the gunpowder fright is got out of all our heads, and we are going on hereabouts as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself by wild riot, excess and devastation of time and temperance.'

The Earl of Salisbury entertained his Majesty well whilst he was at Theobalds; perhaps too well, for James liked the place so much that he induced the Earl to exchange Theobalds for Hatfield House. It is probable that the Earl had no choice in the matter: the King wanted the house and he had to submit. But one rather revealing picture comes down to us of his taking a last look round at the house and the beautiful gardens before handing them over to the King.

James, for his part, was delighted with the bargain: the hunting at Theobalds was the best that could be provided, the Chase was well stocked with deer, and there was promise of abundant sport, all within easy reach of the Capital. Besides, James had recently had a nasty shock when Guy Fawkes had attempted to blow him up with his Parliament: and he estimated that Theobalds would be a much healthier place to live in than any of the palaces in the City. Therefore while he was King, James made Theobalds his home.

But what sort of a man was King James? 'Though he was not handsome his features were thoughtful and intelligent with a gleam of cunning in the eye and an expression of sarcasm about the mouth. His beard was a yellowish brown and scantily covered his chin and he wore a thin light



moustache. His complexion was ruddy, his large eyes were for ever rolling about and his tongue was too large for his mouth, causing him to splutter in utterance and giving him a disagreeable appearance while eating. His legs were so weak that he required support in walking.'

As to his character he was something of a puzzle: he had been called 'the wisest fool in Christendom' or the 'Scottish Solomon'. There are plenty of evidences of his folly at Theobalds. A contemporary writer says that 'he did many wicked and cracked-brained things here' for he had 'fools, fiddlers and master-fools' and some of them called him 'Old Wife' and some 'Your Sowship'. It was said that 'he was carried off to bed after proposing five and thirty healths; that oaths were never off his lips, nor cowardice and hypocrisy ever out of his heart. Yet to counterbalance all this he translated the Psalms, wrote books of piety, and welcomed bishops to his presence as warmly as if they had been buffoons.' He wrote a set of rules addressed to his eldest son. They are contained in his book: 'A King's Christian Dutie towards God.' Here are some of them: 'Certainly bodily exercises and games are very commendable as well for banishing of idleness, the mother of all vice, as for making the body able and durable for travell, which is very necessarie for a King. But from this Court I debarre all rough and violent exercise, as the football, meeter for lameing, than making able the users thereof; as likewise such tumbling tricks as only serve for comedians to win their bread with; but the exercise that I would have you to use, although put moderately, not making a craft of them, are running, leaping, wrestling, tennise, archerie, palle-malle and such like fair and other field games.

'And the honourablest and most recommendable games that you can use on horseback, for it becometh a Prince, best of any man, to be a faire and good horseman. Use, therefore, to ride and danton great and courageous horses, and especially use such games on horseback as may teach you to handle your armes thereon, such as the tilt, the ring, and low riding for handling of your sword.

'I cannot omit heere the hunting, namely, with running hounds, which is the most honourable and noblest sort thereof;

for it is a thievish forme of hunting to shoote with gunnes and bowes, and greyhound hunting is not so martial a game. As for hawkinge, I condemn it not, but I must praise it more sparingly, because it neither resembleth the warres so neere as hunting doeth in making a man hardie and a skilful rider in all grounds.'

## YOUNG RAWLEY

by BRYHER

Orinoco,  
sad river,  
whispering a name—  
'remember young Rawley?'

'If he be  
one of the young thousands  
who never came  
from their journey,  
what is it to me?  
Let him lie with his English memories  
under the cannibal leaves,  
we all die somewhere.'

With humming bird gentleness  
the river dirges,  
'forget if you will why they went,  
forget young Rawley,  
can the leaves alter my banks,  
Man obliterate glory?'

# CUSTODIAN OF THE DREAM

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FRANCIS MACKARILL

CIVILIZATION—all the varied detail of custom and habit which leads men to restrain and modify their crude drives and give one another scope for broader, richer satisfactions in life—is poised on a dream and on nothing more substantial. But that dream is the laboured product of countless thinkers and at times has been given a dominant and assuring unity by some few venturesome spirits who had the courage to cultivate a delicate sensibility and to respond wholeheartedly to the universe of impressions thrust upon them.

At the end of an age, when dreams were changing, Shakespeare drew together that complex of images and sentiments which we are in some measure able to build upon the recorded words of *The Tempest*. It was in this play that Prospero the magician spoke of the collapse of his vision and of how his revels were at an end; and soon, in the grim phantasm-haunted pages of John Webster and Cyril Tournear we sense a world of nightmare. We are in at the dissolution of the dream. Flamineo in *The White Devil*, after a life of Machiavellian bloodshed, coughs as he bleeds and dies, and muses sardonically:

I have caught  
An everlasting cold; I have lost my voice  
Most irrecoverably.

Vendice in *The Revenger's Tragedy* has lost the joy of life, and can see about him little else beside lust, the harlot's bewitching paraphernalia, and the mouldering bones of charnel houses. We see him with the decked skull of his beloved, and his words are bitter:

Does every proud and self-affecting dame  
Camphire her face for this, and grieve her Maker  
In sinful baths of milk, when many an infant starves  
For her superfluous outside—all for this?  
Who now bids twenty pounds a night? prepares  
Music, perfumes, and sweetmeats? All are hushed.

Thou may'st lie chaste now! it were fine, methinks,  
 To have thee seen at revels, forgetful feasts,  
 And unclean brothels! sure, 'twould fright the sinner,  
 And make him a good coward: put a reveller  
 Out of his antic amble,  
 And cloy an epicure with empty dishes.  
 Here might a scornful and ambitious woman  
 Look through and through herself. See, ladies, with false forms  
 You deceive men, but cannot deceive worms.

The 'metaphysical' wit of these passages is characteristic of the period, and echoes disconcertingly to-day.

We ourselves are in a period of hesitation, and in the general hotchpotch of asserted fact, theory, opinion, and action, we find it difficult to discern a larger whole—what men have called the sense of it all. We need scrutiny and re-scrutiny of our whole universe of experience. We need the ministration of the looker-on who is not above participation in our way of life, such as we have been able to make it. The cultured foreign gentleman, the Persian travellers of Montesquieu will no longer serve; the whole world is involved. No Martians have yet come our way. We must help ourselves. A few amongst us must be directly encouraged to cultivate and develop their sensibilities while they are yet young, and be always probing our human situation. The artist must find assistance as well as the intellectual.

The role of artist is not one of passive contemplation. He does not sit motionless and unruffled in the flux of life, and like some psychic barometer—a mechanical and cumbersome device—merely register the changing pressures of his situation. For the life of godlike contemplation is neither possible nor worthwhile. No man welling with the energy of life could for one lucid moment desire it. Would it not be an inanimate existence, contributing nothing to the furtherance of terrestrial aims unless interpreted by those who had not in neurotic extremity forgone the daily pains and pleasures of life?

We cannot truthfully say of sense impressions that they are thrust upon artists. Only the crudest sensations are so experienced. A man must meet his environment half-way, must

attune himself to the sort of sensations he has a concern with, must set himself alert and ready for all those perceptions which are relevant to the task in hand and ultimately to his way of life. Like the television he must scan the detail of his situation and pick up and arrange in order each useful scrap of it until he has fashioned a whole to act upon, a complex of informative sensations from which to judge the course he must take.

The activity of these bold few is an outpost activity, a wrestling with the dust at the world's edge with now and then a peering at the null beyond. Such pioneer work is not for the faint-hearted. Achievement in this sort of life can come of nothing less than whole-hearted dedication. To most people it seems incomprehensible, however much they may stand ultimately to benefit through all those subtle ways in which a changed attitude to life seeps down decade by decade from one level of mental activity to another in this paper-laced and celluloid-chained age.

These bold few are custodians of our life-dream. Artists and poets they live a life of pulsating finger-tips, of sense-organs innervated to the limit of endurance. Yet again they live at the centre of their psyches, amid the whole rich array of their multifarious and carefully garnered perceptions, and sensitive to the complex fluctuations of their emotive tone.

The human body—flesh and with it mind—is the yardstick of their dream. It is, if they have tended it carefully but not mollicoddled it, a well-tuned instrument which vibrates on ever more and more strings with the increasing richness of life. What other criterion is there except the co-ordinated satisfaction of impulses and desires in all their variety and only limited by the similar needs of all other people?

The artist in words lives no casual life of lucrative scribble; nor does he emerge the monstrous growth of one humid and enchanted night. The great artist in colour is no idle dauber, nor does he merely elaborate the childhood graphetae and smears of lavatory walis. The sculptor does not ply the chisel for want of dung to mould. They all, aware of it or not, have a hand even in the simple details of our lives; for as they modify the various images and facets of their dream, stretching here and compressing there, lengthening and foreshortening, so

they change the symbols men hold before their eyes in the rough-and-tumble of living day by day.

No community that wishes to enjoy a fuller life, or even to continue gaining the satisfactions it has known, can afford to hinder the individual guardian of its dream. All values repose in its dream, but that dream is evanescent and will not survive—certainly it will not increase and grow richer—without continued impregnation. Printed words will not hold it; for they change, they deteriorate, they slip and slide away, crushed or rubbed thin or distorted in the feverish money-changing of the market place. Without the dream there is no value in life. Even the simplest act is mediated by some image, however fleeting. The image points the goal and there is no appraisalment of life without it.

^ The artist has generally seemed to the mass of people a fortunate pet of some whimsical patron with more money than sense, or he has been regarded as a ne'er-do-well who should be put to useful work. We may even yet hear him called a spiv or a drone. The idea of leisure for many people seems to be nothing more than luxurious idleness and quite different to that ceaseless struggle with personality which the artist knows, a struggle in which he must draw to a unity all the random but exasperatingly powerful impulses that so easily run riot and are apt in their expression to leave in the minds of men no more than the hazy memory of some little agitation or other; such an ephemeral impression as might be left by the spluttering transit of a squib, thrown not without excitement by a romping schoolboy during the hullabaloo of Guy Fawkes Night.

The attainment of a harmonious psyche and the resulting appraisalment of the environment in which it pulsates, is not enough. The vision, or what is felt about life, must be shared with people who spend most of their time thinking about other things. Choice of symbols is difficult. The artist has isolated himself and must handle again the shapes that the world is accustomed to, however inadequate they may be. So the artist must concern himself with what people have thought and done before him and how they communicated their thought. In this lies the importance of tradition. The study of

a tradition, however, is not for slavish imitation. The artist needs a point of departure, a springboard to jump from. He cannot know what might be until he knows what is.

This division between the personal dream of the artist and the external array of commonly held symbols is, of course, artificial in the extreme. The poet does not live without words and then turn to them as any business man might pick up the handpiece of a telephone. Rather does he mature with them and through them, experiencing as he goes whole bundles of psychic energy, projected by other sentient beings first on one verbal symbol and then on another.

The artist's concern with old symbols is not on the abstract plane. Symbols that are distant and becoming amorphous, almost lost in the recesses of the mind, he must with his controlled personality fill out again with feeling, must test them for whatever relevance they may have for his time and place. Men found them useful once; they may perhaps do so again. At least, in the process of filling them out with the attitudes conditioned by his own day, the artist may sense their flaws and the parts that cramp a sensibility they were not intended for.

The man who concerns himself with old symbols as symbols only, is no artist. He had better seek the leather-scented library, where dim-eyed pedants gaze at the picture-show of life. The artist must be no mere image-exchanger in the market place or temple-court. His is the day when in white heat of creation he shall drive those inert bodies out, scattering their soiled coinage as they go and cursing him who dares to shake their old time confidence.

The way or ratiocination when checked by an ever-repeated return to the detail of the universe, a constant observation of the gear we find about us, is a great achievement in man, and the means of increasing his control over what shall happen to him—of increasing the field in which his will may operate, the scope for rational self-determination—and of making the lives of all men full. But it is very far from being all that is requisite to a happy life. Isolated from the welling fount of the psyche it becomes vitiated, dissolute, debauched, and those who rely on it alone will make of it a Juggernaut to crush and maim themselves, the deluded victims of its cult.

## LAMENT

by BARBARA NORMAN

One woman sorrowing  
 in one lone covenant:  
 for ever the heart  
 of her bright Archer rent.

All arrows spent:  
 empty the quiver,  
 and hanging-down the hand,  
 the bow of the light body  
 broken in a barren land;  
she went,
 thinking of an earth whereon  
 fierce feathers fall  
 and none lament.

## THE INCURABLE

by BARBARA NORMAN

She, whom none call beautiful,  
 lies like a queen of long-lost dynasties,  
 her grey, age-laden eyes dark with the will to die,  
 her life laid ever-wards and shadow-wise  
 towards the blind white wall;  
 and fear, the vilest malady of all  
 plays carrion along her liliated bones,  
 insatiate, hungers her skeleton.

And she, most beautiful and most alone,  
 bereft of all her body's constancies,  
 turns for her grieving to the gentle dead,  
 for the love that the very-living do not give;  
 cries Christ in vain; from her long pale limbs  
 to her high fine head, robed in indignities,  
 crossed with her loss and crowned with the skull of pain.



# FATE THAT UPROOTS AND STRIKES DOWN UTTERLY

by BARBARA NORMAN

Fate that uproots and strikes down utterly  
has struck again: Fate that pursues, confounds,  
devours, despoils, oh bitterly destroys—  
that smites the branching of the brightest tree,  
that blights the roots of the most beautiful,  
that havocs its shapeless hunger on humanity,  
has stricken the eagle in its wildest zenith,  
has plundered the shape of rapture for her own.  
Fate has struck down the tower of bright bone.

The span and stature of a life lie shattered;  
beyond the sunlight and beyond the shadow  
the white statue in the moonlight lies alone:  
Love was the sculptor here: Time will not dare  
the passion of that shrine; the stark white stare  
of stars shall blind not to living eyes  
this spirit of a man upturned to its Creator,  
this heart of love enshrined into Infinity,  
this mind in grace of truth so deep, so rare,  
that all of wisdom, all of innocence seem measured,  
graven and enfolded there—Love shaped that form,  
and lit with flame the spirit and its dreaming:  
beyond the shadow and beyond the sun, risen  
by revelation to reality, lifted in dedication,  
this spirit and the courage of its questing—  
this mind in vigil and this dream in vision,  
in grief, in joy, in wonderment were One.

Though Fate that uproots and strikes down utterly  
has struck again—has plundered the shape of rapture  
for her own—though the beat of the great heart,  
and the wise wide eyes and the wide and shining mind

are fallen for ever with the tower of bright bone,  
 and though the deadliest of deadly wills is done,  
 Death shall not make her claim, Time shall not follow,  
 Dust shall not cover, Dust shall not dull that name,  
 oh name of lovely life! Wondrous, oh inconsumable!  
 Name to whom Love and Life were lived as one, sprung  
 from beyond the shadow and beyond the sun—oh name  
 that in the beat of the World's Heart shall remain—  
 for it was forged of Love and shall be raised in Flame.

## POEM

by BARBARA NORMAN

On that great grief she died.  
 'I am too old! My eyes asylum-wise!  
 Before my life I was too old,  
 My breast, my breath too cold!  
 Even too cold for death to be my bride!'

You World! You unaware!  
 You thieved her dreaming lair,  
 the dark and dreaming diamond  
 of her share! You broke  
 the newborn mirrors of her eyes;  
 you stormed the sleeping waters;  
 you roped her throat with terrors  
 and cut her shining hair.

Who wonders that she wavers on the stair,  
 her mindless, bird-blind eyes  
 side-peering where she died,  
 with a small anger of longing  
 and a great love burning side by side?

## SONNETS OF THE MADONNA

by JOHN ORMOND THOMAS

*The sap of the tree prays its all-holy prayer*  
 For the never-gone and lost in the sure  
 Light, found in sun's fountains, and the shower  
 Of the dwellers in sleep who move in the fair  
 Ways of wings weeping dark to come, the dire  
 Deep dark the stars in the heaven lure.  
 And she, who in light's last grave keeps this rare  
 Son, is their food and their flesh and care.  
 Madonna at his mouth, whose mortal breath  
 Breathes in the air of his immortal heart,  
 Numbers the words of the tree and counts his death,  
 The days which cut the dying two apart.  
 Carrying the kiss of light and lying dead,  
*The unborn child's green buds blaze in her head.*

*The unborn child's green buds blaze in her head*  
 In the midnight minute after the four  
 Walls fall at his sudden rainbow's leaping fire.  
 Calls in the laddered wind echo the wild word  
 Of his mouth, and her senses hang blinded  
 Till at her finger-ends she feels the flower  
 Of the world burn, and his seven shades retire  
 In one white train of angels overhead.  
 The word whirls small into the unseen sun.  
 She feels his leaves curling towards the frost,  
 Carrying the firstborn blood her altered vein  
 Will bear, the endless summer of his last  
 Cry, how in the frost and flower's sin  
*His loud and lasting infancies begin.*

*His loud and lasting infancies begin*  
 With all the dispensations of the bright  
 Creation, the hand of proffering light  
 Pouring its sand in sleep, its voice in stone  
 And welcome, gentle in the starlight rain,  
 Searching the truc word in the sage's throat.

Then to the snow and summer the long threat  
 Of summer and snow returns, returns again.  
 His prudent weathers mark the pageantries  
 Of turning seasons, modify the rain,  
 The strung beams of the changing tides and seas:  
 Constructing peace or advocating ruin,  
 Wearing the ancient precepts of the light  
*In the dark shell keeping the flame from flight.*

*In the dark shell keeping the flame from flight*  
 The adoration of the watching eyes  
 Moves at the seeds whose fellowships arise  
 To the high trees waiting the final sight  
 Of coming birds singing their one quick note.  
 They come after the beseeching sap cries  
 To the stones. And the deep, white root recries  
 Annunciation to the naming night.  
 The rainbow wakes again in the green art  
 Given to his calling veins, the fiery leaves  
 Of his entreating, unreflecting heart,  
 Where no wound aches, no roaring wonder grieves,  
 Accepting gifts and glory from the calm  
*Rejoicing branches and the trodden palm.*

*Rejoicing branches and the trodden palm*  
 Hold him together in their slow embrace.  
 Their stiffening fingers sear his mother's face,  
 Coming through crowds to add her silent psalm,  
 Touching the early blades once in her womb  
 Whose talking points must pin him with their ice  
 To morning sun until her tears release  
 Him from his tree and wash him for his tomb.  
 Now other blades turn tribute. The infant eye  
 Is gouged by threats of crosses grown to hymns.  
 She in her heartbeat hears the kingly cry  
 Of weather charm the season in his limbs,  
 And takes him out of grief before the swords  
*Cut off the killing silver of his words.*

*Cut off the killing silver of his words,*  
 Who tells his doom, my own, in the brief flame  
 And prayer, giving all ending time its name  
 In seed and chrysalis. The calling birds  
 Have sung their obsequies. And light rewards  
 Their coming, knowing well the endless time  
 His distances wind in the holy dream  
 His sun's high flame, his failing flesh affords.  
 His flight in dark prevents the vesper dark,  
 His whispers father fall into her praise  
 On lips, my own, on tongues, on mouths to mark  
 His double birth in her cold languages,  
 Whose womb took seed in crossing fire and shade  
*Through the first word of heaven in her head.*

*Through the first word of heaven in her head*  
 She hears the death of trees which struck his green  
 Foliage and parables with their unseen  
 Touch, miracles curving through drifting blood.  
 Here is the first recession of the word  
 From human walls since the bright rainbow's sign  
 Filled her stunned bone with the approaching grain  
 Of the blown world when all is harvested.  
 Hearing the incantation and the kiss  
 Telling him to the frost before his fruit  
 Can fall from coming cold to all's last bliss,  
 She feels the prophetic motion of the root  
 Start at the dead in dreams, the children wound  
*Where the prayer touches stone and nurtures ground.*

*Where the prayer touches stone and nurtures ground*  
 With a torn tongue, she rises to the cry  
 In the hung heat of his eclipsing sigh,  
 Mothering sun and night in his dragged wound;  
 Her son hangs hollow in the blackened town'd  
 Cloud of his waking gospel, swung by  
 Morning, making his teaching lung burn dry,  
 Fires in the word twitching the dust on sound.

Her churches topple in the sudden blast  
 Of his bone from breath, her breath in lasting light,  
 Rafter and rib in single utterance, lost  
 To murder burning lust of his blind sight.  
 The leaves in riot turn thorns into her lids  
*From the dream-wasting sorrows of his sides.*

*From the dream-wasting sorrows of his sides*  
 His dazzling shadow slips to truth; and she  
 Watches the writing branches of the tree  
 Inscribe his daybreak in the waiting woods.  
 Her tears prepare his never-buried shrouds,  
 Cleansing his wounds from sweat's salt perfidy,  
 His blood from benediction's oratory  
 And grief, seeing the simple, brightening clouds.  
 Birds break in homage to her starry king,  
 His apparition in its song's ascent,  
 The naked note and sinew of his wing,  
 Splintering the gate of doom's frail covenant.  
 Frosts and the weather gather to atone  
*Where he is buried in the hollow stone.*

*Where he is hidden in the hollow stone*  
 He rises, found. The shell lets out its light  
 Into the corners of her coming day, her bright  
 Last resurrection. Snow and summer mourn  
 The never-ending fury of his sun,  
 Seasonless, seething, leaf-fantastic, white.  
 The searching children at his stretching root  
 Bud from their stillness, poise, uncoil and burn.  
 To them, the never-lost and rainbow-rayed,  
 His breath gives colours water never wore,  
 Woven of beams, which, when the sun has strayed,  
 Walk the dark pathways of the buried ear:  
 Her children lost, her children found from fear.  
*The sap of the tree prays its all-holy prayer.*

# SCOTTISH JOURNEY: THE REMEMBERED COUNTRY

by SYDNEY D. TREMAYNE

So I remembered it and so it was:  
Clouds trailing on the hills:  
Steep summits veiled: a soft, slow sky  
Hung downward: in its folds  
A grey wind bulged and fluttered and let fall  
Its hem across the slopes  
Where threads of waterfalls clung to the rocks,  
Roped strands of white deceit,  
As though time's rush had frozen in its leap.

So I remembered it:  
Wind wide, then hidden in a hurl of rain,  
A land of undertones,  
Of stones and stillnesses and restless skies  
That lagged among the trees,  
Crag shapes and shifting contours in the mist,  
Revealed and lost.

Oh world immeasurable of wind and rain,  
What symbol shall I choose  
To catch what moves and will not be set down,  
Even to touch and lose,  
As light bursts through and blurs the loch with fire,  
The swift, eternal hour,  
The charity that falls  
On those who lift their eyes up to the hills?

All meanings call confusion. Time breaks free.  
In veering wind I see  
The soaring eagle fade into the sky,  
Stray feathers among rocks,  
Droppings and plundered feathers and bleached bones:  
Death's imagery of wreck.

The lean-ribbed hills rise up,  
 Tawny and patched with bracken, to the clouds.  
 The tough grass grips the slopes,  
 The sheep and the kestrel, tracking among the tops,  
 See sky's broad shadow slide  
 Steep down the glen and climb the dark hillside,  
 And there the rowan clings,  
 Leaning away from the wind, with crooked back:  
 The gay red rowan with its delicate leaves  
 That grows from a crack in the rock.

The tender rowan first of all that lives  
 Shall stand for words, shall drive  
 Its roots in this thin soil between the stones,  
 Life from the hills' rich veins  
 Colour the land with berries clustered bright,  
 And ride the rough wind's spite.

Red rowan that wards the witches from the door,  
 Be reassurance to the traveller.  
 Ward off the word too much,  
 The faltering touch  
 That gropes for the buried roots of a vanished year.  
 Ward off the fear  
 That clutches the wind with a falling mind's despair.  
 Soar, eagle heart; and gentle tree, endure.



# WOMEN PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

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CLINTON V. BLACK

IT was a clear, sunny November day of the year 1720 that a trim pirate sloop heeling to the fresh land breeze rounded the Point of Negril on Jamaica's west coast and with magnificent impudence dropped anchor in the Bay.

On the vessel's deck Captain Jack Rackham, known up and down the coast as 'Calico Jack' the terror of the Caribbean, leaned against the deck rail and viewed the scene before him with a satisfied air. He had reason enough to be satisfied. Battered down below decks was as rich a cargo of Spanish spoil as any Brother of the Coast could desire. The vessel itself was a late contraband prize of the Don filched by Rackham in the best buccaneer tradition. Even his search for crew replacements had been eminently successful. In the last ten days of October he had scoured every bay and cove on Jamaica's northside drumming up recruits from the plantations, running at low game the whilst until he could increase his company sufficiently. At Ocho Rios he had surprised a canoe which had managed, however, to elude his grasp and make port, but at Dry Harbour fortune had been kinder. Here he had found more volunteers than he could use; here, too, he had overhauled a small sloop entering the bay as he was quitting it, relieved her of her cargo, and with admirable unconcern sailed slowly out of port.

Yes, Calico Jack had reason enough to be satisfied. On the whole fortune had been kind. With patience and cunning he had climbed the blood-stained rungs of the ladder of fame until now he had reached the summit and the broad vista spread out before his gaze was fair to see. Of course, his crew had helped him up the ladder considerably. He always smiled when he thought of his crew—a strange, sly smile. Such a

crew. Unlike any other, he always claimed . . . but he never explained what he meant.

No cloud dimmed the vision on that sunny November day. No warning shade from out the future told of the gathering shadows looming even then upon the horizon. It was good to be there, good to be alive, good to be Jack Rackham. The occasion called for a celebration.

On shore a small group of people gathered near the water-side, their anxious eyes and gestures turned frequently in the direction of the trim sloop riding the gentle ground swell with a slow graceful roll.

A *piragua*,<sup>1</sup> a dug-out fishing boat, bobbing up and down on the blue waters of the bay sailed warily past the pirate. From his place on deck Rackham spied the small craft and lounging to the rails hailed it bidding the crew come aboard for a pipeful of choice tobacco and a can of flip. The *piragua*'s men hesitated, but not for long. An invitation of that kind did not come their way often, besides it was just possible that the pirate captain would blow their small boat to all hell with one shot from the long gun pointing ominously from the vessel's forepeak out of sheer devilment if his invitation were spurned.

Slowly the fishing boat tacked to larboard, drew up alongside the sloop, and the nine members of her crew clambered up to the deck. It would have been far better for them had they risked the pirate's wrath and ignored his invitation, but fate plays strange tricks, besides their thoughts were fixed on the punch bowl and perhaps on the possibility of joining

<sup>1</sup> *Piragua* (*periagua*, *perriagua*, *pettianger*, *pettianger*), a fishing canoe or dug-out, made (according to one authority) of a single tree-trunk (according to another) 'of the trunks of two trees hollowed out and made into one boat'. The term is also applied to a flat-bottomed, two-masted, sailing-barge. '*Piragua*, a fishing boat, is an Indian word derived from *pira* a fish,' writes Richard Hill. 'It occurs in the name of many fishes of the continent, as *piracuta* in the Essequibo: *pira-poca*, the gar-fish; and the famous *pira-roucou*, the red-fish of the Demerara, the *Sudis gigas*. The *piratees*, the people of the Pedro plains of Jamaica, are descendants of Indian fishermen, the only remnant of the aboriginal race of the island remaining, though of mixed blood. Pirates were the navigators of *piraguas*, fishing boats, the first vessel used in piracy in the West Indian seas.' *The Picaroons, etc.*, by the Hon. Richard Hill. Dublin, 1869.

Rackham's crew, who knows? Certain it is that they did not cast a backward glance towards the horizon where even then the white fleck of a sail was swiftly growing larger against the sky's bright blue.

For weeks that sail had dogged the pirate's path, tracking him silently. In his cruise along the north coast Rackham had lingered longer than a man of business ought to have. The canoe which had eluded him at Ocho Rios had carried with it the tidings of his whereabouts to the Governor, Sir Nicholas Lawes, a man of great energy and promptitude. No sooner did the information reach him than he dispatched a Captain Barnet in a well-armed sloop-of-war in quest of the pirate. The Governor's choice was a shrewd one; with the patience of Nemesis, Barnet had tracked his quarry from cove to cove, always one jump behind, until now at last he was drawing even.

The crew of the piragua had barely seated themselves before the punch bowl when the sloop hove in sight. In a moment the scene was changed aboard the pirate vessel. Finding that the warship stood directly towards him, Rackham hastily weighed anchor and stood off, making a run for it. In response to his shouted orders all hands, including the men from the piragua, hurried to spread more and yet more canvas to the wind, and, under the press of every scrap of sail, the vessel buried her lee rails in the white foam and sprang seaward like a terrified thing.

Trim and swift as was the pirate sloop the man-o'-war, having the advantage of the freshening land breeze, soon began to outsail her. Relentlessly the warship bore down on her quarry, the white wave rising to the thrust of her bows and spreading astern in a wide foamy wake. Using the tactics of the buccaneers Barnet ranged alongside the fleeing craft, from his vessel's deck grappling irons reached for the quarry and with drawn swords and pistols the sailors scrambled over the bulwarks and on to the deck of the sloop.

The action that followed was bloody but brief. The pirates lost heart early in the fight and gave ground before the determined onslaught of the man-o'-war's men, fleeing to a vain retreat below decks. Two of their number only held

their places, fighting shoulder to shoulder long after their comrades had retreated, fighting alone and unaided against the whole of Barnet's crew. Had the rest of Rackham's men shown half as much courage as these two members the issue would no doubt have been different. It is recorded that when the threats of these two fiery pirates failed to awaken the craven spirits of their comrades to a show of fight, one fired his pistols down the hold, killing a deserter outright and wounding others.

But even two pirates such as these are no match for a whole crew and eventually they went down before the sheer weight of numbers and were captured. The sloop was speedily controlled and manned, the conflict ended with a strange suddenness as fate and the law caught up with Jack Rackham and his notorious crew on that sunny November day of the year 1720.

A fortnight later Captain Barnet sailed into Port Royal with the pirate sloop in close custody to receive the commendation of his Government plus the handsome reward of two hundred pounds, one hundred for himself and the other to be divided among his ship's company.<sup>1</sup>

The news of Rackham's capture was enough to shock a callous world hardened to surprises of the kind, but even that was to pale into insignificance when on November 10th, at a Court of Vice-Admiralty held at St. Jago de la Vega, the astonishing revelation was made that the two fire-eating filibusters who had staged the sensational last stand on the deck of the pirate were not men but women disguised as men, Anne Bonney and Mary Read by name!

The story of these two sea-amazons is a remarkable one. Captain Charles Johnson,<sup>2</sup> the faithful chronicler to whom

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, 1st November, 1720.

<sup>2</sup> Nothing is known of Captain Charles Johnson; the name may even be an assumed one. All that can be stated with any certainty is that in 1724 a small octavo volume appeared, entitled *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates . . . by Captain Charles Johnson*. Nor, beyond a general remark in the Preface, is there any hint of the sources whence the author got his information; that he was accurate, even to the smallest particular, is attested by every English or American historian who has had occasion to corroborate his stories from other sources. It is a

posterity is indebted for the full account of their lives, was himself acutely aware of the unbelievable nature of their biography.

'The odd incidents of their rambling lives are such,' he writes, 'that some may be tempted to think the whole story no better than a novel or romance; but it was supported by many thousand witnesses, I mean the people of Jamaica, who were present at their trials and heard the story of their lives upon the first discovery of their sex.'<sup>1</sup>

But novel the story is, and romance, too, of a high order, if true, for all that.

In many particulars the lives of Anne and Mary are alike. Circumstances rendered it necessary for both to shed feminine identity at a tender age and adopt male manners and dress. They were both destined to sail under the Jolly Roger and, what was more remarkable, on the same ship, even though it was but a short time before their famous last fight that they became aware of the other's existence and identity, although for years they had both engaged in similar exploits.

Mary Read was born in England of English parents. Her mother, who married early, had a short and unhappy married life. Soon after the wedding her young seafaring husband left England on a voyage from which he never returned, leaving her with a boy child born some time after his departure.

The widow, who was 'young and airy',<sup>2</sup> soon found herself faced with the prospect of having another child and with the difficulty of explaining satisfactorily how she had come by it. She solved her dilemma for a time by leaving London for the country where nobody knew her and where her second child—a girl whom she named Mary—was born.

She remained about four years in the country when, her

coincidence worth remarking that the first Pirate he describes is Captain Avery, hero of *The Successful Pirate*, a play by Charles Johnson, the dramatist.'—Arthur L. Hayward in his EDITOR'S NOTE to *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*, by Captain Charles Johnson. New York, 1926.

<sup>1</sup> Captain Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pirates from their first rise and settlement in the Island of Providence to the present year*, New York, 1926, p. 130, hereafter cited as Johnson, *History of the Pirates*.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, *History of the Pirates*, p. 130.

slender resources exhausted, she found it necessary to return to London. It was then that fate took a hand. Her boy child died suddenly and she hit on the daring stratagem of dressing Mary in the boy's clothes and passing her off as her son.

The scheme worked well; even Mary's grandmother was deceived and made her an allowance of a crown a week. Mary was only thirteen when her grandmother died. This meant the cessation of the allowance, and, with no other means of support, the child was obliged to earn her own living.

Her first job was that of 'footboy' to a French lady, but she quickly sickened of this service and 'growing bold and strong, and having also a roving mind'<sup>1</sup> she entered herself on board a British man-o'-war. The wanderlust soon reasserted itself and she deserted the sea for the army, joining a regiment of foot in Flanders as a cadet, where her courageous behaviour won her the notice and esteem of her officers.

But underneath her soldier's tunic beat a passionate woman's heart which in time she lost completely to a young handsome Fleming, her bedmate and constant companion in arms.

Although she managed to conceal her passion she could not hide all the manifestations of that change which takes place in a woman in love. She became forgetful of army routine and negligent in the care of her weapons. These signs might have passed unnoticed but for her new habit of accompanying her companion, unordered, whenever he was dispatched on dangerous missions.

As the days went by her strange behaviour began to be remarked, meanwhile she was finding it increasingly difficult to hide her secret from the soldier himself. At length, says the chronicler, 'as they lay in the same tent and were constantly together, she found a way of letting him discover her sex, without appearing that it was done by design.'<sup>2</sup>

The Fleming's astonishment quickly gave place to keen delight at the discovery, and he thought of little else but of gratifying his passion with scant ceremony. Mary, however, had other ideas, and he soon found himself courting her for

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *History of the Pirates*, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-2.

a wife. When the campaign was over she publicly proclaimed her true identity and was married to her former comrade in arms to the unbounded amazement and delight of the regiment, who subscribed handsomely towards the couple's housekeeping.

They removed to Breda and there opened an eating-house, or ordinary, called 'The Three Horseshoes', where they did a good business, their chief customers being the officers of their old regiment.

As with her mother, Mary's married life was destined to be short. Her husband died suddenly and the Peace of Ryswick being concluded soon after she was forced to close the eating-house for want of custom.

Hedged round with difficulties Mary Read once again donned man's apparel and returned to Holland, where she joined a regiment of foot quartered in one of the frontier villages, forsaking the army later to take passage aboard a Dutch West-Indiaman bound for the Caribbean.

The vessel had the misfortune to fall in with Rackham who seized and plundered her thoroughly. During the action he was so impressed with Mary's sword-play, costly as it was to himself, that he offered her a berth on his ship (believing her to be a man) which she readily accepted—becoming the second female crew member, though she did not know it at the time: her partner in disguise being none other than Anne Bonney!

Anne, like Mary, was an illegitimate child. Her father was an Irish attorney who lived in a town near Cork, her mother was his house-maid, the liaison which was to result in Mary's birth having taken place while the attorney's wife was spending time in the country for the benefit of her health.

For some time previously the wife had suspected an affair between her husband and the maid, and on her return from the country decided from certain indications that her suspicions were not groundless. Her husband had not troubled himself to write to her once during her stay away, and had gone out of town on the very day of her return on some slight pretext. Convinced that his reason for staying away that night was in

order to spend it with the maid, she cunningly arranged for the latter to sleep elsewhere while she took her place in bed.

'The husband came to bed, and that night played the vigorous lover,' writes Captain Johnson. 'But one thing spoiled the diversion on the wife's side, which was the reflection that it was not designed for her. However, she was very passive and bore it like a Christian.'<sup>1</sup>

She appears to have been likewise passive over the separation from her husband that not unnaturally followed. She was kinder to him than he deserved, for although they continued to live apart she made him a substantial allowance from her personal income.

It was some time later that the maid bore the attorney a daughter named Anne, which he adopted. To conceal its identity he dressed the child as a boy and said it was a relative's son. The wife, however, had her suspicions regarding the child and discreet investigations revealed that it was not a boy at all but the maid's daughter. Unwilling to contribute towards the support of the child she immediately stopped her husband's allowance.

This was an ugly turn for the attorney who, realizing the futility of further pretence, defied convention, and taking the housemaid home lived openly with her. His conduct soon became the talk of the town and his practice fell off so sharply that he was forced to give up law. He went to Cork for a time and later embarked for Carolina, taking his daughter and the maid with him. Once in America he soon forsook his legal profession for the more profitable life of a planter, and in a short time became a prosperous plantation owner and a person of standing in the Colony.

In spite of the amenities surrounding her upbringing, Anne grew into a strapping, boisterous girl whose fierce ungovernable temper often got her into trouble. It is said that she once stabbed a servant-maid to death with a clasp-knife because the latter had dared to censure her conduct!

The sea had a strong attraction for the girl and she fell into the habit of frequenting the waterfront disguised as a man. Her father, confident that she would outgrow her

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *History of the Pirates*, p. 138.



wayward habits, gave her much her own way, setting about the whilst to arrange a good match for her. Both his confidence and plans were to be rudely smashed one day when Anne turned up wedded to a shiftless sailor named John Bonney whom she had picked up in a waterside tavern.

Turned out of doors by her exasperated parent, Anne and her sailor husband knocked about the seafront for a time, eventually making their way to New Providence in the Bahamas, the Sargasso Sea of the world's riff-raff and a notorious rendezvous of the buccaneers.

It was around this time that the dashing freebooter 'Handsome' Jack Rackham also arrived in New Providence on a strange mission—a mission of repentance. He had come to claim the King's Pardon recently extended to all pirates who swore to eschew their old calling and settle down as quiet, decent citizens.

Rackham by this time had acquired a reputation for himself as a fearless freebooter. In his early years he had served as quarter-master with Vane's company aboard the *Independence*, but Rackham was ambitious and his promotion was not long in coming. It happened one day that a French man-o'-war ran across the freebooters between Cuba and Santo Domingo. For reasons of his own Vane declined to engage the Frenchman, much to his crew's disappointment. A council of war was called at which Vane maintained his stand, although strenuously opposed by Rackham and the majority of the company. Vane's attitude was a serious blow to his prestige. He was voted unworthy of his command and set adrift in a small sloop, Rackham being unanimously chosen captain in his stead.

Good fortune smiled on Calico Jack at the start. In his very first cruise as commander he took and plundered a number of vessels, thereby adding to his prestige and personal coffers. But piracy had its ups and downs, and he was, in fact, rather down on his luck when the publication of the King's Pardon brought with it new hope.

Making his way to New Providence around mid-May of the year 1719, he and some of his old cronies claimed the

benefit of the amnesty. Selling the spoil he had with him for ready cash, the ex-pirate captain settled down in the island and abandoned himself to a life of ease and debauchery for as long as his money should last.

It was shortly after his arrival that he met Anne Bonney. Anne, who had become the toast of all the waterside taverns, was swept off her feet by the dashing picturesque Calico Jack, whose methods of courting a woman or taking a ship were similar, as one writer puts it—no time wasted, straight up alongside, every gun brought to play, and the prize boarded.<sup>1</sup>

The only hitch to their association was the unfortunate existence of John Bonney. Anne, however, solved the difficulty with characteristic enterprise by approaching her husband for a formal separation, offering to have Rackham pay him a liberal sum by way of compensation.

It is very likely that John Bonney welcomed the arrangement. Anne had turned libertine on his hands and he had had little commerce with her since the day he surprised her lying in a hammock with another man. But somehow the news reached the ear of the Governor of the island, who took a different view of the matter. Summoning the parties concerned he gave them a piece of his mind plus the solemn promise that if he heard anything more about the proposed separation he would have Anne publicly flogged and her executioner would be none other than Rackham himself!

This edict set the couple back on their heels. Rackham, meanwhile, had squandered all his gold and now began to feel the pinch of an empty pocket; besides, life on shore was beginning to pall and he longed once again for the feel of a deck beneath his feet, and the freedom of the blue Caribbean.

In Anne he found a kindred soul. Between them they plotted secretly to seize a sloop which lay in the harbour and to run away to sea. Rackham had no difficulty in gathering a crew of ex-pirates who like himself were weary of shore life and longed to be back at their old occupation. He readily agreed to take Anne along provided she adopted male attire (no new departure for her) and swore to keep her identity secret.

<sup>1</sup> Philip Gosse, *The History of Piracy*, London, 1932, p. 203.

After some discreet spying, ably done by Anne, a date was fixed for the venture, the time midnight. Fortune was kind to the schemers, the night was dark and rainy, all hands were punctual, and with Anne Bonney back in man's disguise the most resolute of all, they took a boat and rowed out to the sloop. Once on board, Anne, a cutlass in one hand a pistol in the other, went straight for the ship's watch and silenced them effectively; Rackham and the others meanwhile hastily heaved in one cable and slipping the other drove down the harbour.

They had to sail past the fort and guardship which hailed them, asking where were they going. Through the fog and rain Rackham called back that his cable had parted and there was nothing else on board but a grappling which would not hold them.

Shrouded by the darkness he put out one small sail to give them steerage way, then, once past the harbour mouth, up to the sloop's tapering spars soared sail after sail as the trim vessel, heeling to the gale, bounded out into the night as loud cheers broke from the throats of the pirate crew. It was on the deck of this sloop that the paths of the two women pirates at last converged and there, too, one of the strangest chapters of Caribbean history was destined to be written.

From then on the name of Rackham became the most dreaded moniker on the Caribbean, his reputation and success being attributable in no small measure to the daring and prowess of his two female crew members who, although unaware of each other's secret, became close friends and always went into action side by side. This strange attraction eventually led to a mutual revelation of their real selves for Anne, falling in love with Mary, whom she took for a handsome young seaman, first told the other the secret of her sex. 'Mary Read,' says the chronicler, 'knowing what she would be at, and being very sensible of her incapacity that way, was forced to come to a right understanding with her; and so, to the great disappointment of Anne Bonney, she let her know she was a woman also.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *History of the Pirates*, pp. 133-4.

Rackham meanwhile, noticing the growing intimacy between Anne and the young sailor, threatened to cut the latter's throat if the affair continued, thus forcing Mary to take him also into her confidence, which, to the end, he never betrayed.

Romance was to enter Mary Read's life once more before the curtain was rung down on her masquerading career. On their cruise the freebooters took and plundered a number of ships out of Jamaica on board one of which was 'a young fellow of a most engaging behaviour' <sup>1</sup> whom Rackham pressed into service aboard the sloop.

It was not long before the newcomer had unwittingly won Mary's heart. They soon became messmates and strict companions and Mary prepared her plans for making her true self known to him.

'When she found he had a friendship for her as a man, she suffered the discovery to be made, by carelessly showing her breasts, which were very white,' Johnson records.<sup>2</sup>

The days that followed were deliriously happy for the couple. They applied their troth to each other and lived as husband and wife. This, Mary later declared before a Jamaican court, she looked upon to be as good a marriage in conscience as if it had been done by a minister in church.<sup>3</sup>

Their happiness was destined to be short-lived. It happened that the young seaman quarrelled one day with another crew member who challenged him to a duel. The sloop being at anchor off one of the islands, the two men appointed an hour when they should go ashore and fight their duel, swords and pistols, pirate fashion.

Mary was frantic with anxiety when she learnt of the impending fight and determined to prevent it at all costs. Accordingly she took the first opportunity of picking a quarrel with the pirate and, challenging him ashore, fixed the time two hours earlier than that at which he should meet her lover.

Mary Read had fought many duels, but never before from such a motive or with so fierce a determination to win. At the

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *History of the Pirates*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

appointed time she and the pirate went ashore and together selected a secluded spot for their fight. Their exchange of fire resulted in no hits on either side, and whipping out their cutlasses they began the duel to the death.

The pirate was heavier and stronger than Mary, but in her he found an adversary quick and agile, who was able to parry or elude his every stroke.

Back and forth across the beach they fought, their blades clashing with sharp staccato notes, their footsteps weaving the pattern of conflict in the soft white sands of the cay.

The pirate, heavier and slower than his opponent, began to tire first. Beads of sweat glistened on his hairy face and his breath now came with effort. Gradually through the red haze clouding his mind broke the cold realization that his antagonist was trifling with him, wearing him out against the instant when he should relax his guard.

Summoning all his strength he lunged at Mary in a desperate offensive, but the latter had danced beyond his reach, whilst he, carried forward by the savagery of his attack, lost his balance for a moment. He would no doubt have recovered but for his opponent, who leapt to his side and in one quick motion tore open her rough sail-cloth shirt. For a short moment the pirate forgot his guard, forgot his peril as he stared in utter surprise at what he saw. But that moment was his undoing, for Mary, grasping his sword arm, almost severed his head with a stroke of her cutlass. The pirate crumpled slowly sideways to the ground and lay very still, a red foam bubbled from his lips, staining the white sands of the cay.

Suddenly Mary Read heard the familiar sound of a boat grounding on the beach; she looked up and a faint smile lit her features. It was her lover coming in good time to keep his appointment with the pirate.

In the Public Record Office is a rare publication printed in Jamaica in 1721, entitled in part: 'The TRYALS of Captain John Rackham, and other PIRATES, who were all Condemn'd for PIRACY, at the Town of St. Jago de la Vega, in the Island of JAMAICA, on Wednesday and Thursday the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Days of November 1720, as

also, the TRYALS of Mary Read and Anne Bonny. . . . And of several Others, who were also condemn'd for PIRACY.' <sup>1</sup>

The 'other PIRATES' referred to include Rackham's nine guests from the piragua. The judge, in passing sentence of death on them, made, says Lovat Fraser, a 'very pathetic speech, exhorting them to bear their sufferings patiently, assuring them that if they were innocent, which he very much doubted, then their reward would be greater in the Other World. But,' adds Mr. Fraser, 'everybody must own their case was very hard in this.' <sup>2</sup>

Both women pirates pleaded pregnancy at their trial and thereby earned a postponement of execution. Anne was eventually reprieved and disappears from recorded history, although it is claimed that through his connections with influential Jamaican planters her father arranged her return to Carolina, but Mary, the gallows-cheat, died in prison of a fever contracted during her lying-in.

Rackham was executed at Gallows Point on the Palisadoes, his body being later hung in a gibbet on the sandy cay which bears his name to-day.

On the morning of his execution he was allowed a visit from his sweetheart of happier days. The interview was short and disappointing for the condemned pirate chief, for the fiery Anne, still outraged at his craven conduct off Negril, had no word of consolation for him. She made no effort to conceal her disgust as she stared at the sorry figure of the fallen chieftain huddled in a corner of the condemned cell with the rest of his crew.

'I am sorry to see you here,' she yelled, 'but if you had fought like a man you would not now be hanged like a dog!'

Mary Read's lover was acquitted as it was proved that he had been pressed into service. Mary herself might have earned the clemency of the court but for one damning piece of evidence. At the trial it was disclosed that on being asked once what profit she could find in a life continually threatened

<sup>1</sup> Frank Cundall, *The Governors of Jamaica in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1937, pp. 89-90.

<sup>2</sup> Lovat Fraser, *PIRATES with a Foreword and sundry Decorations*, London (1921), p. 27.

by death from fire, sword, or hanging, she replied that, as to hanging, she thought it no great hardship, for were it not for that, every-cowardly fellow would turn Pirate, and so infest the seas that men of courage must starve! <sup>1</sup>

Such is the story of the women pirates of the Caribbean as history has preserved it. The chroniclers do not record all the intimate details of their lives, the things they said and thought and dreamed. It is the reader who must supply this need, if he would know more—the reader who must seek beyond the printed page for the faint echo of a ribald pirate song and the harsh creak of gibbet chains on sinister Gallows Point.

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *History of the Pirates*. p. 133.

# THE COTTAGE CONCERT

---

W. G. OGILVIE

RANNIE, all dressed up and holding his violin case, called to ask whether I would go with him to a 'cottage concert'. I agreed.

After a quarter-mile scramble over a stony parochial road, we turned off across the fields. The next part of our journey took us through barbed wire fences, over drainage ditches, until at last we came to 'Morass Corner'.

The stars shone bright in a warm tropical night, as we climbed a steep hillside. Over a rude gate a storm lantern swayed from an arch of plaited coconut boughs. The hefty black man standing on guard let me through, after Rannie had explained that I was his guest.

On account of the steepness of the land, the front part of the dwelling stood high on stiltlike posts. So we had to enter by the back door which abutted on the hill.

Inside the small hall, about nine feet square, the aristocrats of Morass Corner had assembled. Two benches had been set along the walls at right angles to each other. In the middle rear of the apartment the chairman sat before a little table. On the bench beside him was a broad brimmed thatch-straw hat. The table held a tiny bedroom oil lamp, next which were some sheets of paper. The gentleman was clad in khaki shirt and trousers. His bare feet rested firmly on the gleaming floor.

Again Rannie made his whispered explanations. The chairman beckoned me to sit beside him, as he removed the hat to the floor. Rannie sat on a chair at my side, his violin case tightly clutched by his left hand, while on his face was a look of lofty determination.

The chairman banged for silence, then he began: 'Lady and genkleman, we is all here at this met so as to has a little enjoyment.' He glanced in my direction, as he went on, 'We is very honourable to have a well-known genkleman, one of



weself, who are spendin' holidays in the distric'. We hopes he will enjoy himself.

'The Bible tell we that there is a time to laugh and a time to cry; a time to be joyful and a time to mourn; and a time to festillate weself, and a time not to festillate weself. Well, we is here met tonight to laugh, to be joyful, and to festillate weself.'

The first item on the programme was a recitation but the writing was none too good, while the president proved a poor scholar. He peered down at the paper, announcing, 'We now has a restitution entitled by—by—by—'

Here I came to the rescue. 'It's by Miss Flettup,' I whispered.

'Ay, yes, sah. Thank you, sah.' His voice boomed. 'We will now has a restitution entitled by Miss Flettup.'

Miss Flettup arrived, and in an affected high pitched voice, raced through her piece in record time.

The chairman spoke again, 'A song entitled by Mr. Bell.'

'Don't worry about him,' called a man's voice from among the humbler folk who had been put to sit on boxes under a small booth that had been pitched against the rear door, in such a position that they could see into the room. 'I just left him stone-drunk on Chinaman shop-piazza.'

'A restitution entitled by Mr. Star.'

As Mr. Star did not come up at once, someone went to the door to call, 'Mr. Star, Mr. Star; Theeolphiis! One of you call Theeolphiis for me, no?'

Still he remained absent, so the chairman went on to the next piece, 'A duet entitled by Miss Ribbs.'

Just as the lady took up her position, Mr. Star arrived; so she had to sit down again.

The gentleman affected a Yankee accent which hardly anyone understood. This hulking man, who couldn't be less than thirty years old, recited a child's nursery poem, beginning,

'Twinkle, twinkle, little star;

How I wonder what you are.'

Miss Ribbs afterwards came up for her 'duet', and my friend got out his instrument from its case. Rannie's ideas of music were peculiar. It seemed that the violin had not been strung properly, at any rate not to play the melody of Miss

Ribbs's song. The violinist wandered artfully into the realms of treble and alto, always taking care that each verse should end full of resounding bass. The instrument's queer ways were even more noticeable when Miss Pouse came to sing. It flirted madly with treble for a start; then shifted over to make violent love with tenor; but when that also refused to be wooed, it kept skipping between bass and alto. On one occasion the lady, who had pitched her song too high, stood with mouth wide open, puffing for all she was worth, but no sound issued. Here the violin came gallantly to the rescue, with much noise striving to conceal this gap.

After this came a 'solo' by the 'quiner'. When the choir came out, the audience discovered that among the whole five of them there was only one book. The 'leadress' standing by the table tried in vain to find the selection. Several attempts having failed, she looked at the chairman.

'Call the next piece,' she ordered. 'A person can't find the dym thing.'

Mr. Samuels was called. He had taken his stand and cleared his throat, when the lady cried, 'I find it; I find it!'

So Mr. Samuels had to return to his place.

The next trouble was a light for the choir. The performers stood against the right wall of the room, facing the audience. The only lamp was on the chairman's table toward the rear. When the song book was held up, the pages were in the shadow. So the 'leadress' borrowed a flashlight. Standing a little in front of her comrades, she held it over her head to shine downward on the pages, while the rest crowded round craning their necks to peep.

Not long afterwards, the concert ended, and dancing was about to begin. Some new musicians came and sat down under the rear shelter. As the sounds of their tuning-up reached me, I turned to my friend.

'Are you going to play for the dance, too?' I asked.

Rannie pursed his lips before replying. 'Me don't think so, sah. Them men is a pain. It is not anybody and anybody I can play with. Them won't keep correct time; and me is a man what keep correct time. As you know, sah, me play by notes, almost.'

'Well, no one has said anything to me about the fare for the concert. I want to pay it; for I am going home.'

'Tchut, sah!' he protested. 'You can't want to leave, and we is just going to start enjoy weseelf. Wait and do a little dancing.'

I was doubtful, pointing out, 'I didn't bring any lady to dance with; and as I never grew up here, hardly anyone knows me now. I hear that you fellows don't like to see any stranger dancing with your women. You throw a stick on them.'

'Tchut, sah! Don't worry about that. I will fix matters correct.'

'All right, I'll stay.' I told him. 'But I must see about paying the concert fare first.'

'That is all right. Is why make you is going on so? What is the hurry? Wait so till it is all over; and then you can pay for everything.'

His method of finding me a partner was simple. 'Hi, Susan!' he bawled to a young lady. At his call one of the only four girls who was not barefooted, came to us.

'Now, this is me friend what I brings here to-night; and I wants you to entertain him and treat him well. You must dance with him and make him feel good.'

He walked off to get a partner for himself.

Presently the music began, and I clasped the very full-bosomed damsel to my manly chest.

As the music got 'hot', the dancers became lively. They jumped and stamped, until the tiny building began to sway crazily on its stilts. The air began to smelt strongly with our sweating bodies. I danced three pieces and then went outside.

Presently a thundrous voice startled me: 'Mistah Hucklebee, Mistah Hucklebee!'

I approached, inquiring, 'What is it?'

'This way, sah,' spoke our recent chairman.

Piloting me through the gyrating bodies, he led me into the next room, where stood a small group of barefooted stalwart countrymen, whom from their grave looks, I took for a gathering of local worthies.

'You trouble cane-oil, sah?' At this question he held up to the light a quart bottle of newly distilled white rum.

'Yes,' I assured him.

One of the fraternity produced a glass, which he rinsed carefully.

Then with the command, 'Say when,' he started to pour. On receiving the glass and lacing its contents with water, I stood waiting on them to charge up also.

'Go ahead, sah. Don't wait for me.' I was encouraged. 'We is waiting for the glass.'

Then it dawned on me that as there was only one glass to serve us all, they had politely made me drink first, as a sign of respect.

I obeyed; and then they all, one by one, took their drinks.

Pretty soon the scalding 'cow-neck' that I had drunk commenced to make me feel uncomfortable. It seemed wise to reach home quickly, before I felt ill.

It took some trouble to persuade Rannie that I was serious, seeing that in his opinion, the fun was just starting. But at length he agreed to pilot me as far as the highway, from where I could find my way home unaided.

'Now, please find out how much I am to pay,' I begged.

As he himself did not know, he called one of the two young ladies who had put on the show.

'You see, sir,' she told me, 'it is not a regular paying thing. It are just a little at home amusement. We makes the charge very reasonable. A penny for ladies, and a penny ha'penny for gentlemen; for the concert and dance together.'

To show my superiority, I gave her threepence.

# THE ROAD FROM ST. THOMAS

---

R. L. C. AARONS

A MAN's figure suddenly emerged into the glare of the headlights and signalled me to stop.

I brought the car to a standstill a few feet from him. It was only then I realized how tall and cadaverous the man was. Of a pale, brownish complexion, his face an unearthly appearance by the light from the car. In fact he looked exactly like a corpse.

He approached the car.

'Going to Kingston?' His voice was a deep guttural.

'Yes,' I replied, wishing suddenly I hadn't bothered to stop.

'Give me a lift?'

'Why—er—yes. Come in.'

I made a movement to open the door beside me. He peered into the darkness of the car.

'No. I guess I'd better sit in the back. More room for my feet there.'

He gave a mirthless chuckle as he indicated the length of his legs. He fumbled for a moment with the handle of the back door and as I stretched across to help him, my hand came in contact with his. I could barely repress a start of surprise. They were cold and clammy. Like death!

At once all my misgivings returned. What could be the matter with him? Was he ill? If so, suppose he got worse while in the car!

But the little sounds of contentment that came from the back seat as the stranger settled himself comfortably were hardly those of a sick man. On the contrary.

Suddenly his deep guttural voice broke in on me.

'I see you often going up and down this road.'

'Quite likely,' I replied. 'I used to work in St. Thomas. But I don't remember ever seeing you before.'

He gave his mirthless chuckle.

'No, you wouldn't see me unless I wanted you to.'

I was about to ask what he meant by this cryptic remark but let it pass. There was something about the man I didn't like. Something—well—uncanny. For a mile or so he remained silent, then, leaning over, he suddenly prodded me with a bony forefinger.

'I say, mister.'

'Yes. What?'

'I am—or rather—you wouldn't believe you were talking to a man that's supposed to be dead for nearly twenty years?'

'What on earth did you say?' I shouted back, refusing to believe what I had heard. 'Supposed to be what?'

'Dead. For twenty years!' he repeated with evident relish.

How I managed to prevent the car from getting out of control remains a mystery.

'But—but of course you aren't! I mean, it didn't really happen, did it?'

He gave his mirthless chuckle.

'Of course I'm not dead. You can see for yourself.'

'But why are you supposed to be?'

He was silent for a moment or two.

'I'll tell you,' he said. 'You remember a schooner that was lost nearly twenty years ago while on her way from Jamaica to Cuba?'

I tried to think. I had a dim recollection of having heard something about it as a boy, but that was all.

'Yes,' he went on, 'she was overloaded. Those were the days when money was to be made in Cuba. The schooner ran into a sudden squall a day or two out and everybody aboard was drowned except a couple of the crew.'

'And you?'

'I left Kingston on board but went ashore at Port Royal to have a few drinks with a friend. Must have had too many, for when I got back to the wharf the boat had sailed.'

'Lucky for you!'

'I should say. Of course, I never knew what happened to the schooner as I got a passage on another sailing the following day.'

'And I suppose they published your name among the passengers that were lost?'

He gave his characteristic chuckle.

'Yes. And what is more, I never sent to tell my wife and children I wasn't really drowned. You see—' he chuckled again. 'I could then forget them with a good conscience.'

'Wretch!' I murmured under my breath.

'It wasn't, however, a wise thing to have done,' he went on reflectively. 'For now that I've come back they won't believe I'm not really dead. Consequently, I have nowhere to go.'

'Well, it's your fault. Where you are going now?'

He seemed to consider for a moment.

'I guess I'll go to Port Royal. There's a road there now I understand. You can drop me when you come to it.'

As can be imagined, his story allayed my fears considerably. It was at least plausible. Still, there were one or two things about my companion that seemed rather unusual. I have already mentioned the coldness and clamminess of his hands. Now I noticed something else. A peculiar odour that came, I suspected, from his clothes. Salty. As though they had been washed in sea water and had never been properly dried. He reeked with the smell of the sea.

Anyway, I'd soon be getting rid of him. I increased the speed of the car. The needle crept from thirty-five to fifty. That was fast enough, I decided. In a few minutes I'd be at the Port Royal Road.

The white signpost came into view at last. I slowed down and stopped.

'Well, here's your road. If you wait a few minutes you'll probably get a bus.'

No sound came from the back seat. He must have fallen asleep. I turned round to wake him.

'This is the Port—' I got no further. Power of speech seemed to dry up within me; the back seat was empty and I was alone in the car. My companion had disappeared as completely as if he had never been.

For a moment or two I stared uncomprehendingly at the place where he had been sitting. Then the probable truth of the whole affair began to dawn on me.

Was it possible! Good Lord!  
I hastily restarted the car and raced off.  
And as if in confirmation of all that I feared, away out to  
sea—or was it my imagination—there came distinctly the  
sound of a low, mirthless chuckle.

## TREES

But this night is momentous:  
You and I trees planted far apart  
Trying to touch one another. You trying  
To understand, and I the wind pleading through  
My leaves; what keeps the distance?  
And mark, you have been planted centuries  
Before me, and are strong. While I so  
Sudden in your life surviving the strength  
That vanquished others, and now worried to death  
How peacefully to whisper under your shade  
Embracing your leaves and mine—to win together.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

## POEM

Meeting you is  
Opening my window into bursting day  
When night comes  
Why should I weep?  
Leaving you is  
Knowing in me deep  
Flowers of you.

GEORGE CAMPBELL



# PINKFEET ON THE SOLWAY

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RICHARD PERRY

THE perennial coming of the wild geese is for some of us the great event of the year—White-fronted and Barnacle geese down the west coast; Grey Lags, Bean geese, and Pinkfeet through Highland straths and glens and at three or four thousand feet over the Cairngorms and Grampians; little black Brents coming in over the North Sea to alight on the Holy Island slakes and watch awhile before walking swiftly down to a gut for a drink and a bathe. That way, too, come more Pinkfeet, beating up slow and heavy against the gale, their flight formation changing from second to second, from line to chevron, from chevron to double chevron, and back again into wavering line. They pass low over the sea-cliffs, with the clamour of young hounds in full cry, but do not drop down to the spacious mudflats, passing steadily westwards to their sanctuary on the Solway; while others, again, come down from the north and pitch on the remote waste of the Goswick sand-rig—their safe retreat for the remainder of the winter.

On reaching their Solway wintering grounds, gaggle after gaggle, day after day, nearly all the Pinkfeet end their long flight by gliding down to the salt-marsh, with never a beat of broad wings, from a mile or so distant of the marsh: though others whistle down in a leaf-like falling motion. For a few weeks ten or fifteen thousand Pinkfeet stay about the Marsh, before gradually drifting away to other west coast sanctuaries, leaving a nucleus of from one to four thousand to winter on the marsh. Before emigrating north in Spring all reassemble on the Marsh once again.

For the first few days after their arrival in the autumn the Pinkfeet are suspicious and restless, constantly getting on the wing, with a babel of yelping, to gaggle round the adjacent fields and hills; and at this time they feed in the dim light of

early morning and evening, passing the hours of daylight right out at low-water mark on the vast sand-flats of the firth, where I cannot approach them within a quarter of a mile.

Geese, like other animals, enjoy certain physical sensations, and one of these is to feel the incoming tide swirling higher and higher about their legs. Though such heavy birds their webbed feet are extremely sensitive and they dislike feeding on stubble and potato-fields when the ground is frozen and the hard, irregular crust and furrows jar their feet. In such weather they are likely to be especially faithful to their grazing grounds on the marshes.

With the flow of the tide excitement among the geese becomes intense and the punctuated calls of individuals swell to a sudden colossal clangour, which gradually subsides to a curious humming note—a remarkable sound to be heard only at moments such as this or when all the thousands are grazing to their hearts' content in the moonlight, unsuspecting for once. Every now and again the even humming rises to a quarrelsome crescendo, when little groups of geese run at one another with outstretched necks and hissing bills; and everywhere there is movement—some swimming, others bathing, dabbling, drinking, and walking to and from the water, erect, gracefully, and easily.

When a neap tide begins to ebb back off the sands the geese begin to fly, or walk, up to feed on the marsh. One lot after another at irregular intervals, it is an hour before the sands are bare of them. It is a strange sensation lying out behind a pile of driftwood on the marsh waiting for the geese to pitch in near those of their fellows already feeding fifty or sixty yards from me. This is about the only help one gets from geese: the knowledge that, if fifty or a hundred Pinkfeet are feeding in one particular part of the marsh, it is certain that those hundreds or thousands still out on the sands will join them when they too fly up to graze. As many as a thousand may fly up together, with a mighty roar of wings like the rumbling of a train over the distant viaduct, changing in a minute from a distant black line to exciting reality. They come into the marsh down-wind but, in order to alight among those already

feeding, must ultimately turn into the wind. In this way the whole flock passes over my head, turns, and passes over me again, line after line, as they pitch in only a few feet above me; but, reassured by those feeding below, who take little heed of them, they do not descry me.

Grey geese, Bernacles, and even Brent on occasions, graze: but whereas Grey Lags neatly snip the marsh-sward as bare as a lawn with their long beaks, the shorter-billed Pinkfeet pluck up the grass by the roots and, like Mallard, pit the marsh with deep mud holes where they have been guzzling for plantains. A patch that they have guzzled for a few hours looks as if it had been 'rootled' by a herd of small pigs—until the next high tide rolls it smooth again. Thus, whereas the Grey Lags, like Wigeon, graze in the orthodox manner on the drier flats and the sandy swards at the brow-edge of the marsh, the Pinkfeet, together with Teal and Mallard, favour, by no means exclusively, the slushier depressions in the central parts of the marsh. The drier the winter, then, the fewer the Pinkfeet feeding on a salt-marsh, if there are stubble or potato-fields round about.

On the Solway the geese move spasmodically backwards and forwards between saltings and exposed grass hills on the lower slopes of the Cheviots and Pennines and, when conditions are favourable, stubble and potato-fields backing the marshes; but the salt-marsh is their main feeding ground: whereas, in a locality such as Holy Island, the thousand-odd Pinkfeet wintering there feed entirely in the hinterland, using the Goswick sand-rig only as a retreat and watering place. The hill sites on the Solway are quite unapproachable and tend to be subsidiary resting places, from which the birds may return to the marsh or estuarine sand-flats at three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Thus, there is no regular goose fighting to the Solway, as to other coastal parts of Britain, such as the Wash, with its leagues of potato-fields, where there is commonly a morning and evening flight from feeding-fields to resting mud-flats; or Holkam, where there is, or was, the same shuttle-movement between their fresh-marsh sanctuary and the coastal sands. On the Solway external factors are less constant: morning and evening flights are less strongly marked, often

non-existent; and little and large gaggles of geese are roving to and fro about sands and marsh at all hours of the twenty-four. It is rarely possible to go to the marsh and see no geese—in fact, I never have done so yet.

Once established in their winter routine the geese feed by daylight, except during the moon or, if there is much shooting, in the half light of dawn or dusk. There are other factors regulating their somewhat complex day to day movements—tides, punt-gunners, current food-sources, snow on the hills, frost on the marsh. When they are feeding on the marsh my common experience is to find them grazing steadily away from me, straggling away in droves, as is their way when they are a little uneasy but uncertain of any real danger, without my ever getting any closer to them, however far I may wriggle on my belly through the slushy and sodden grass. But sometimes I have found myself lying only forty or fifty yards distant from a three-sided grey phalanx of perhaps five thousand Pinkfeet, and have found that these great masses of geese hide other goose personalities. Among the brown-necked Pinkfeet nearest to me on one occasion was a single Grey Lag. His long yellowish flesh-coloured beak was very noticeable among the stubby pink and white, black-nailed bills of his companions. He prowled backwards and forwards, being chivvied a little—a ponderous, ill-shaped goose among the slender graceful Pinkfeet.

Although there may be more than a hundred Grey Lags scattered over the marsh at one time, one rarely finds more than a dozen together: whereas further down the Solway, where there are as yet no Pinkfeet, four hundred of these massive geese graze in a flock on a marsh only a few yards from the road, while another fifteen hundred thrive in the seclusion of a fresh-marsh sanctuary a mile or two inland. The Grey Lag tends to fly and also feed in silence, so that one can work around a flock on the marsh all day and not be aware of their presence. In any case small numbers of Grey Geese are extremely difficult to spy on the vast waste of the marsh. Grazing sheep, drift-waste, hummocks of turf broken off creek banks and deposited upon brow-edges—all these things they resemble very closely; while their forest of upstretched necks

are indistinguishable from thistles when seen through a mirage of heat-waves; and grazing, their bent necks plucking at the grass, they are just shapeless lumps, for their great wings cover them like shards; on the *qui vive* upstretched necks are lost against the low grey sky of these flat lands. The silent Grey Lag scores, from the point of view of preservation, over the Pinkfoot, who yelps continually on the wing and maintains a constant chatter when feeding. The Pinkfoot, too, like all successful species, does things on the grand scale, liking to feed and bathe and rest in the company of hundreds or thousands of his fellows. On the other hand, the very size and restlessness of the Pinkfoot flocks makes it almost impossible to get within shot of them, which is never a very difficult matter with the Grey Lag. Though liking to associate in these huge flocks the Pinkfoot is, at the same time, of an independent nature. The gaggles continually split up in flight; small bundles of geese are continually leaving the main feeding flock for a fly round; and when the main flock does itself take flight, it is not at all unusual for a family of two old birds and a young one to be left behind.

Most large assemblages of Pinkfeet also seem to harbour one or more albino geese. My particular white goose was a gander, who lived on good terms with his fellows and had turned up on the marsh for three or four consecutive winters. He was not really white but, rather, a very pale buff or cream in colour (like most albino wild birds), with the characteristic darker head of a Pinkfoot and conspicuous among his companions at a great distance. On the return migration one spring no fewer than three white Pinkfeet visited the marsh, all belonging to one gaggle—a gander and a goose paired up together and a gander with a normally coloured goose.

On one occasion when the single albino had taken to the wing with the thousands of his grazing fellows, the inevitable small group of some fifty geese were left on the ground, hardly disturbed by this mass retreat, and I found myself looking at a solitary black Bernacle, busily cropping the grass among his companions! While on another occasion, when the Pinkfeet got up from a sandy sward below the marsh proper, they left behind them three little black Brent—though until 1936 my

landlord, who had been wildfowling for forty years, had never shot a Brent on the Solway.

However, the Pinkfoot is ten or twenty times as numerous as the Grey Lag and, restless, aggressive, adaptable, gregarious, and an omnivorous feeder, pushes ever further westwards. Fifty years ago there were no Pinkfeet on this part of Solway, which was the sanctuary of the silent, peace-loving, ponderous Grey Lags and of the noisy Bernacles. But, where formerly there were six thousand Bernacles on a certain marsh there are now six hundred and where four hundred Grey Lags, forty.

## SEPARATION OF SLEEP

by NORMAN McCAIG

So she who farther than America  
Lies by my side dies in a whoop of sleep  
That in her brain like braves with a leap and a cry  
Sinks its bronze tomahawk and slackens the torturing rope.

And I in a green day hear the animals  
Making multitudes in the mask of woods  
And look for her wandering there like waterfalls  
And gathering me in baskets of her words.

Her head is fallen. O far and farther than  
America she dies beside me, and  
There is no voyage through this day of green  
Will find its harbour rocking in her mind.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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THE MUSES' DARLING: THE LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. CHARLES NORMAN. London: The Falcon Press. 12s. 6d. net.

MR. CHARLES NORMAN bought his copy of Hotson's *The Death of Christopher Marlowe* in 1925, and his Oxford Marlowe in Paris a little later. For the rest he has sojourned in the New York district with this book as the goal of some twenty-six years of Marlovian contemplation. His approach is that of the amateur, the enthusiast, and, one fears, the journalist. He does not set up as a scholar. In fact, though he makes use of recent scholarly research, he indulges in those vague parenthetical sneers at the monstrous race of scholars that so usefully serve to cover Ignorance's naked frailties.

Now this is an odd disposition in a man who elects to write about Marlowe, for in Marlowe we have, essentially, the scholarly mind moving upward in the quest of 'knowledge infinite'. Mr. Norman, like many other recent Marlovians, is too much concerned with Marlowe the man, too little with Marlowe the supreme exponent of Renaissance aspirations. The man is a handful of documents: the Kyd bits, the Middlesex Session Roll bits, the parish register bits. He was violent, 'attempting soden pryvie iniuries to men.' So, too, were Barnabe Barnes, Porter, Watson, Daye, Jonson, and possibly Shakespeare. And he was an Epicure and an Atheist, *teste* Kyd and Richard Baines.

Baines's accusations have a familiar ring. They are not so very different from the charges brought later against Giordano Bruno, and the garbled table-talk of a somewhat undergraduate kind that Baines and Kyd were able so conveniently to recollect proves very little, except, perhaps, that Marlowe sometimes carried a joke too far. It is, in fact, high time that Marlowe's interpreters realized that these bald and trivial allegations bear little or no relationship to the speculative philosophy expounded in the tragedies and in the great narrative fragment. The assumption that Marlowe was a man with an easy conscience is the deadliest of preliminary mis-

apprehensions, and it is unfortunate that the very real conflicts which the man and his work present should be obscured by a few casual utterances.

Since Mr. Norman presumes to put the scholars in their place, it is unfortunate that he is not able to distinguish the sheep from the goats. This is especially obvious when bibliographical problems arise. Here Mr. Norman, like Mr. Bakeless before him, is content to be quite perfunctory. When the problems arise, it seems that they can quite easily be settled by reference to the peculiar researches of Dr. Samuel A. Tannenbaum. It does not surprise us, therefore, to find Kyd spoken of as a part-author of *Sir Thomas More*. Yet it is passing strange to find that anyone could suppose that the three pages generally assigned to Shakespeare might be by Marlowe. Admittedly Mr. Norman, faced with the choice, chooses Shakespeare. But why drag Marlowe in?

The implication is that there is something remarkably naive about Mr. Norman's book. This can be clearly exemplified. To what audience, for instance, are the following text-book crudities directed?—

'Forty years before, two young men had wrought a reformation in English verse by restoring to it some of the naturalness it had once possessed. They were the ill-fated Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and his friend, Sir Thomas Wyatt. Wyatt was the better poet, but Surrey has had the more lasting influence—indeed, it is a fabulous subject, this one of pondering the direction English poetry might have taken had he not, in translating two books of the *Aeneid*, used blank verse instead of rhyme.'

Elsewhere Mr. Norman pipes a wilder tune:—

'Roaring drunkenly homeward in the month of May, 1592, Christopher Marlowe collided with Allen Nicholls, constable of Shoreditch, and Nicholas Helliot, under-constable. Perhaps he assaulted them, thus confirming Kyd's accusation about Marlowe's "rashnes in attempting soden pryvie iniuries to men". Frowzy heads of queans popped from the doors and windows of Holywell Street—behind them, peering hard, their soldier or actor clients. They saw the celebrated poet in the toils of the law—again.'

This is ink-pot biography which sets no limits to fancy and cannot bear to be defeated by the factual hiatus. Nevertheless,



one cannot really disperse a mist by pretending that it is not there.

Where Mr. Norman dispenses fact, he usually does so fairly accurately, but there are some odd aberrations. 'About this time, or very shortly after, he (Shakespeare) was at work on Act Three of a new play to be called *As You Like It*.' Now 'this time', the time when Marlowe was killed, was 1593, and I see no reason for supposing that *As You Like It* was written before 1598 at the earliest. Again, it is not safe to assume either that the English *Faust* book was in print in 1589 or that Greene's *Friar Bacon* followed and imitated *Doctor Faustus*. Recent research strongly suggests the contrary. There are some queer bibliographical speculations. There is, for instance, the notion that Marlowe's 'youthful poetry of rhythms' was so profuse and exuberant that it 'sometimes spilled over into a stage direction:

*Alarums within, The Duke Ioyeux slaine;  
Enter the King of Nauarre and his traine.'*

It is a pretty guess. Unfortunately, the octavo of *The Massacre at Paris* is a pirated text and its stage directions are not at all likely to be Marlowe's. Mr. Norman's attempt to emend a section of *Edward the Second* seems quite superfluous.

Americans, it seems, are fascinated by Marlowe. Many of them presumably detect some parallel between his activities and those prevalent in the underworld of Chicago, and perhaps it is for such that this book is intended. If only Mr. Norman had been able to accept Meres's testimony that Marlowe 'was stabd to death by a bawdy Seruing man, a riuall of his in his lewde loue', this might well have emerged as the Book of the Film.

JAMES M. NOSWORTHY

## ENGLISH LITERATURE BETWEEN THE WARS.

B. IFOR EVANS. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

CAN a principle of selection, however sound in theory, justify a literary historian in ignoring some of the principal authors in the period he is discussing? Would the accent on Revolution, for example, in a history of English literature c. 1785-1815, justify an historian in disregarding the novels of Jane Austen?

If the answers to these questions be in the negative, then Dr. Evans has spoiled a competent piece of work. Only Edwin Muir's pre-war study, *English Literature since 1914*, has succeeded in this field more eminently than Dr. Evans' book. Muir's history had most of the critical virtues; Evans' has most of the scholarly. I feel the more disappointed, then, that his principle of selection has led him astray.

He thinks, with many others, that the great writers of the period are those who 'attempted to express in imaginative terms' the 'general disruption of civilization' between 1918 and '39. 'Other writers, however brilliant, fall somehow short of the highest level if they ignore this spiritual crisis in man's history.'

The principle seems accurate enough in theory, if we give it a wide interpretation, but in practice it has led Dr. Evans to devote, for instance, a whole chapter to Aldous Huxley, while completely disregarding T. F. Powys and L. H. Myers—two of the greatest novelists who have ever lived. And this is all the more astonishing, because of the several places in the actual text where Dr. Evans could have fitted these novelists in with the greatest propriety.

For example, in the sensible chapter on Virginia Woolf, this passage occurs: 'One can only emphasize again that the artists in this period had special problems. . . . They were led into strange paths. . . . There still remains, however, the great and comprehensive tradition of Shakespeare . . . and Dickens.'

There certainly does! And this tradition was kept alive, between 1918 and '39, by the novels of Powys and Myers, as well as by the work of others whom Dr. Evans rightly praises. I have respect for the literary experiments of Joyce and Woolf, but the main line of development was elsewhere, as much in *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* and *The Root and the Flower*, both of which Dr. Evans ignores, as in *A Passage to India*, which he rightly discusses at some length—and which could so easily, and so economically, have been considered along with Myers' masterpiece.

Again, Dr. Evans quotes a phrase from Forster's *Howards End*—'Death destroys a man: the idea of Death saves him'—

which is so in line with the *Fables*, *Mr. Weston* and *Unclay* that it would seem appropriate to have referred to them—particularly as these works were published between 1925–35, while most of the work of Forster, including *Howards End* (1910), lies outside Dr. Evans' period altogether!

But there is plenty of sound sense in this little book, and Dr. Evans has the happy knack of frequently compressing much into a little space. I take this admirable example from p. 16 : 'In that year (1929) . . . *The Edinburgh Review*, which had existed since 1802, "in order to accustom country gentlemen to the reading of books," ceased publication. Within a few months *The Listener* was on sale. . . .'

R. C. CHURCHILL

HIGH HEAVEN. JACQUES BOELL, translated by DILYS OWEN, with an introduction by FRANÇOIS MAURIAC. Paul Elek. London, 1947. 12s. 6d.

THIS is an elegant book, a labour of love at all levels. The mountaineering it describes was that, as the author takes care to point out: 'as a child . . . the sight . . . of the first snow-fields clinging to the flank of a wall . . . made my heart pound with delight and longing as violently as an adult's does with desire. . . . I firmly believe anyway that the motive power behind all passions springs from the same source' (p. 50). And his writing has the vividness of passion too: 'rock whose very aspect gripped you, like the glance of some women; tall slabs of yellowish rough-grained protogine, with rounded edges, which were a gift from heaven to mountaineering maniacs' (p. 12). The translator too has been fastidious, searched with care for the right words and the publishers have lavished pains: the maps and diagrams of the routes taken, the glossary of climbing terms, the dramatic photographs, even the jacket on which the happy climber seems to be literally floating over the summit rocks (in a mood to ignore the disappearance of a letter from his Christian name), all these things combine to convey a crisply and movingly clear image of this queerest of sports at its best.

The climber will recognize its authenticity, its sincerity and evocative power from a brief sampling. He should not let

François Mauriac's introduction shake his confidence. Such a sentence as 'Above a certain height it is impossible to nourish evil thoughts' well intentioned, no doubt, is in jarring contrast with M. Boell's own honesties. 'Let nobody speak to me of the educative virtues of climbing. I do not believe in them myself, and in fact I even deny them; you come to the mountains *with* your moral qualities, and *because* you have them, not to acquire them. After almost twenty years of climbing and mixing with fellow enthusiasts, I do not know of a single idealist among us who goes in for difficult and dangerous climbs with the idea of improving himself' (p. 62).

But what about the non-climber, who has no store of analogous memories to fall back on? What will he make of such ardours or of the agonies and endurances these adventurers so gaily push themselves into? Is mountaineering so elemental an experience that, if it is well enough described, those who of themselves care nothing for these doings, can still enter in and understand? Apparently it is. And *not* only as an affair of narrow escapes or sickening possibilities of disaster: the awful drop, the oncoming storm, the icing rocks . . . but of more recondite sources of emotions companioned by joys. Certainly M. Boell's narrations are good ones by which a non-climbing reader may test this out for himself. He may be warned, however, that these climbs are not exactly ordinary everyday expeditions such as his friends (or his son and daughter) may go off to indulge in with the hotel guide. They are the cream of the hard climbing of the Dauphiny, routes sought out to satisfy the craving for innocent conquest.

DOROTHY PILLEY RICHARDS

THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS: THE FAEROE LIFE AND SCENE. KENNETH WILLIAMSON. Collins. 16s. Illustrated.

THE occupation force sent in 1941 to 'protect' Faeroe had a mixed reception from the proud, intelligent descendants of Vikings, some detesting the 'invaders', others welcoming the troops. Many of the latter were 'browned-off' with what they termed a 'God-forsaken' place, but the outlook of troops and islanders changed, until by the time the war ended the people were almost sorry to see the last of their uninvited guests.

Some of the service men married Faeroe girls, a few, including Mr. Williamson, taking a deep interest in the isles and their charming, highly cultured folk. The result of one Englishman's enforced stay in Faeroe in this well-written book of twelve chapters, with numerous illustrations, appendices, and glossary. A naturalist himself, perhaps the chapters on birds and mammals may be the most authoritative, but the work as a whole is packed with first-hand information gathered on long travels all over the isles, that should make it a standard one on the subject.

Beginning with a description of the Atlantic islands, the land, sea, whale-hunting, the author goes on to give a 'Portrait of an Island' (Mykines, in the west), followed by chapters on bird-fowling, corn harvesting, customs and folk-lore, and concludes with a description of the lakes and other islands. A useful bibliography, glossary of about 500 Faeroe words, and subject index add to the book's value; although Christian Ployen's 'Reminiscences of a Voyage to Shetland and Orkney in 1839', is not mentioned. In the account of the development of the fishing industry not enough has been said of the help given by Shetland fishermen in introducing new methods of catching. Many of the smacks working the cod grounds were purchased from Shetland following the collapse of the Shetland white fishing at the end of last century.

That Faeroe folk have forged ahead in all spheres is seen by the population figures of 30,000, an increase from about 8,000 a century ago. Tórshavn, a picturesque little town and the capital, has a population of 5,000. This rise from stagnation and apathy in so short a time is largely accounted for by the emergence of a 'Faeroe for the Faeroese' movement, one of whose leaders was Páll Pállssen from Nólsoy. A poet and patriot, Nólsoyar Páll built and sailed the first Faeroese sailing-ship. He championed Faeroese culture and the cause of freedom in a satirical ballad, representing himself as a *tjaldur* (oyster-catcher) 'attacking the governor, police chief, and other officials of the Danish administration, who he depicted as raven, hooded-crow, greater blackback and other predatory birds. Thus he shielded the people, the puffins of the cliffs, from alleged tyrannies and oppressions.' The wary

and handsome little bird, *tjaldur* (Shetlandic : *shaalder*) which swarms all over both Faeroe and Shetland, thus became a symbol of Faeroese defiance. The bird is held in something like reverence by the islanders, and the author tells several examples of *tjaldur* folk-lore. The author has made good use of his stay in the islands, and a Shetlander finds much in the book akin to the ways and outlook of his own land and folk. One would, however, have liked to see some observations on Faeroe's left-wing parties and periodicals, and the rising literary movement. In this connection there is no mention of William Heinessen, whose fine novel *Noatun* was published in this country (in 1939) under the title of *Niels Peter: A Chronicle of Faeroe*.

PETER JAMIESON

27 WAGONS FULL OF COTTON, AND OTHER ONE-ACT PLAYS. TENNESSEE WILLIAMS. Falcon Press. 15s.

DAZZLED by success at second-hand, we are apt to forget that, in other and eventually more important facets of theatre, America is taking the lead. We have already had hints from Maxwell Anderson and loud warnings from Thornton Wilder and Eugene O'Neill, that, in comparison with America, we have little to offer. Tennessee Williams's new collection of one-act plays is yet another sign that American dramatists can write for the stage, write for an audience and, at the same time, can cling to the purpose and practise of poetry.

Whether he writes of arson and rape in the Blue Mountains (*27 Wagons Full of Cotton*), of bogus vendors of cheap-jack historical mementoes (*Lord Byron's Love Letter*), or of down-and-out lodgers in a New Orleans boarding house (*The Lady of Larkspur Lotion*), Williams gives to his characters and to his situations that tinge of poignancy that can make beauty out of sordidness. Whether he uses metrical forms, as in *The Purification*, or holds to the technique of conventional diction, Williams allows his characters to speak, and be, poetry. Like the old O'Casey, he excels at wringing a beautiful line from most unlovely lips and yet, again like the old O'Casey, the ugliness of the lips is not reduced because they speak beauty;

nor does the shallowness of a character, the squalor of a setting, or the harshness of a situation lose verisimilitude because it has echoes of something deeper than itself.

To create good theatre and yet to use it as the exercise ground of poetry is a task that has defied English dramatists for some years. In the High Anglican cathedrals of the theatre the attempt is still made; the poetry is sometimes successful, but the *theatre* is too often turgid and utterly undramatic. Reading plays is not always a fair prelude to seeing them, but certainly, in reading *27 Wagons Full of Cotton*, appears to have most of the qualities that we have failed to achieve; (and this though the author works in the immeasurably more difficult form of the one-act play); and, in reading, it seems as if these plays must *act* well.

J. E. MORPURGO

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE MASTER RACE. BERTOLT BRECHT. Gollancz. 6s.

A play in book-form, and particularly a documentary such as this by the great German dramatist, Bertolt Brecht, is like a jammed kaleidoscope; turn it as you will, look with all the creative imaginative powers at your disposal, you still can find nothing but a jumble of brightness. Brecht needs his actors to give consequence to diversity, and the stillness of print cannot suggest the excitement of movement or the rhythm of speech.

His theme is well-worn, though, as he wrote most of the scenes in the middle thirties, the dilatory enthusiasm of British publishers and the British Public must be blamed for allowing Hollywood to usurp his priority and for accepting Brecht only when Hollywood has made us sick of dramatic interpretations of the effect of Nazidom on Germany and German-held Europe.

His combination of epic and cinematic forms and his frank dismissal of the necessity for 'suspense', naturalism and clearly defined characterization in theatrical writing; these methods are now well-established among scenarists for the documentary cinema, but the Brecht technique, though by no means his alone, is, in the theatre, still in the hands of pioneers. The

deliberately hideous reiteration of the *Horst Wessel*, like theme music in a film; the placarded notices: BERLIN 1933, ORANIENBURG 1934, TO RUSSIA; the accented reappearances of the Panzer, like cinematic replays of symbolic shots; the poetically accented voice of the commentator; all these devices—tricks, in the best sense, for they are designed to trap the lazy mind into energetic association—we now know well, but Brecht uses them to great effect. If for nothing else, it is as an example of what the theatre might do that this play should be read.

Unfortunately, if this printed version is a jammed kaleidoscope, it is a kaleidoscope seen through the frosted glass of inferior translation. Even in French, it read better—and was better titled. (In justice to the translator, he himself points out the excellence of SCENES DE LA VIE HITLERIENNE.) An English reader, however competent he may be in a foreign language, is there less likely to notice dullness and stumbling poetry. In his own tongue every example of stilted usage is intrusive upon his mind. With this translation the prosiness all too often damns the sense.

And surely, we have not yet forgotten so much that we need pedantic footnotes like 'The Brown House—Nazi Headquarters', or 'Strength Through Joy—a Nazi recreational organization'?

J. E. MORPURGO

MAFEKING ROAD. HERMAN CHARLES BOSMAN. Central News Agency, South Africa. 9s. 6d.

THE Transvaal Boer has appeared to the home-staying Briton in various guises. His existence virtually unknown before the last decade of the nineteenth century, he suddenly appeared as an arch fiend, obstinate, truculent, militant, a barrier to progress. At the commencement of the twentieth century, with the Boer War over and the Act of Union in the making, he was transmogrified under the influence of liberalism into a simple farmer, first cousin to the noble savage of a century ago, compounded of all manly virtues, who had bravely defended his faith and his homeland against British imperialism. Misguided perhaps; but a valuable recruit now to the Empire and



prepared to wave the Union Jack alongside the Indian prince, the Zulu, and the Red Indian.

This view of the Boer persisted until after the 1914-18 war, confirmed by the statesmanship of Louis Botha and Field-Marshal Smuts and the heroic contribution made by South Africa to the allied cause. Thus, the 1914 rebellion on the northern Transvaal frontier passed unnoticed, or at best understood, in this country.

Later, as South African internal politics occasionally reached European headlines, and the growth of the Nationalist Party produced qualms in British breasts, the 'simple farmer' view became modified. We wondered if there was much to choose between the Afrikaner and the Irishman.

The truth, of course, lies between the two extremes, and Mr. Bosman reveals it in his short stories. He reveals the character of the Boer from the inside; in passing he also reveals something of the character of the Briton as seen by the Boer, but that is by the way.

Mr. Bosman's Boer is a simple farmer; yet he can be cunning as any business man in scoring off his fellows. He is a poet, sincerely moved by the beauty of his beloved veld; yet he considers the killing of a black man rather less than the killing of a springbok. He reads the Bible daily; and he carouses on home-made brandy. In time of drought he will work all day in the burning sun pumping water for his cattle; but he most loves to sit on his stoep drinking coffee while his coloured boys work for him. He loves the peace of the veld, the companionship of solitude; yet he loves also politics, argument, debating societies, and, sometimes, war.

These sides of the Boer are shown in the stories, many of which are character studies rather than stories; or perhaps it would be fairer to say they are stories rather in the manner of Chekov than of de Maupassant. There is a delightful humour in most of them; bitter tragedy in some; a deep insight into human nature in all. One is left with a feeling of regret that they are stories of a vanishing race—a race that is at last succumbing to that same progress which it once so bitterly opposed.

F. E. KNIGHT

A BOAT FOR ENGLAND. SIGURD EVENSMO. Translated by Solvi and Richard Bateson. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 8s. 6d.  
 THE UNFORGIVEN. HOWARD CLEWES. The Bodley Head. 8s. 6d.

HERE are two books about the war, one fact and one fiction. The fiction is far and away the most successful. *A Boat for England* reads like an adventure story written for boys of fifteen. It is, in fact, a record of a group of Norwegians who tried to escape to England during the Resistance. The story, recreated from letters from and notes made by Harald Silju and smuggled out of prison, is a record of bravery and endurance. But what a record of futility! Quite frankly, I am not at all surprised that they were caught by the Gestapo and imprisoned. Their plans to escape were of the kind that would fool nobody, and the Gestapo were no fools. For instance, what adolescent mind planned that Harald Silju and the others should go to a certain railway station at 20.05 hours to meet a 'man wearing a white scarf'? Did it never strike them that there might be a dozen men with white scarves there? This and other incidents show, to my mind, why the war went on for so long. It was planned by adolescent minds, who forced others to carry it out. War, of course, is the last resort of the adolescent, but it is painful to have it brought home so forcibly.

On the other hand, Howard Clewes' novel is much more adult. His partisans are as adult as any persons engaged in such a futile occupation as war can be. His Commander has the intelligence to keep his partisans inactive and to buy guns and ammunition from the enemy through the go-between priest, Father Domenicus. Not even the arrival by parachute of the Allied officer, Adrian Bullivant, can rouse the partisans from their strategic lethargy. It is only with the arrival of Slater, the scavenger of a journalist, who already has his war reports written (one describing the partisans' defeat, the other their victory!) that the partisans are forced into unwilling action. And when Slater is followed by the rest of the pack of war-correspondent 'wolves' the carnage takes place. A perfect description this of a small company of fighters being forced into unwilling action because politicians in Westminster and

housewives in Minnesota expect some 'war news' in their morning newspapers. It was clever of Howard Clewes to make the pack of journalists outnumber the potters. The novel is full of such touches. Another excellent piece is the description of Bullivant's mother opening a 'Garden City' when she is so drunk that she falls when planting the ceremonial tree. It is caricature, but caricature so well done that one feels it could, and probably did, happen. Unfortunately, Clewes' novel suffers from a very bad opening. When I first started it, I was put off by the welter of words and what seemed to be its complete unintelligibility. I tried again a week later, however, and this time was rewarded for my perseverance. Where the fault lies, I think, is in Clewes using three planes of Time in his narrative. The past and present were enough. The future might have been implied rather than stated; it confuses the issue. One feels instinctively that the Crosbys of this world, nurtured on war, always end by shooting their best friends. I quite failed to find, too, any significance in the title. Nor could I see why the 'blurb' should state that Crosby is 'every man in search of himself'. Probably it has something to do with this business of shooting Chubb in the post-war world (Oscar Wilde's 'for each man kills the thing he loves?') but I feel it is something too deeply psychological for my grasp. However, read purely as a straightforward satire on war it is excellent.

FRED URQUHART

THE MOMENT. VIRGINIA WOOLF. Hogarth Press. 10s. 6d.

TREATISE ON THE NOVEL. ROBERT LIDDELL. Cape. 9s. 6d.

THE PURPLE PLAIN. H. E. BATES. Michael Joseph. 10s. 6d.

A FRAGMENT OF GLASS. F. L. GREEN. Michael Joseph. 10s. 6d.

NEVER AGAIN. FRANCIS KING. Home and Van Thal. 9s. 6d.

FERNIE BRAE. J. F. HENDRY. William MacLellan. 7s. 6d.

ONE may well feel a little nervous about opening what amounts to a new book by Virginia Woolf, *The Moment*, a collection of essays in which several have never been published

before and many will only be remembered by the most omnivorous and retentive reader of the weekly magazines. A new novel by Virginia Woolf used to be the chief excitement of the literary year and one of her essays would colour with a romantic glow *The Times Literary Supplement*, when it appeared on the austere front page which then had no picture. But now it is possible that the brilliance will have faded; the horrible gulf which divides us from this recent past may well make its amenities look a little forced and perhaps even trivial. One remembers how a detachment from the everyday concerns of life and from practical matters was an essential part of Mrs. Woolf's elaborate art; she had to look at a bus as if she had never seen one before, and even at the time one occasionally felt that there was a measure of judicial ignorance in her attitude, that she was behaving like someone who tried to get himself mistaken for a Duke by being astonished at the existence of table napkin rings. In 1939, as this book reveals, she was quite capable of spinning a laboured web out of the confrontation in an illustrated magazine of a photograph of a royal person and of a caterpillar; she suggested rather archly that science, represented by the caterpillar, might take the place of royalty as a more intelligent thrill for the public, and *Picture Post*, very naturally, did not see the point or approve of it when the article was received by them.

But here Mrs. Woolf was writing for an audience which she instinctively felt would disapprove of her standards, and like many other writers she was at her worst and at her most narrow when she felt or imagined opposition. Given her own subject, the literature of the past and the rather few people she could fully understand in the present, she became both serious and humane, and it is these qualities, combined with a very high professional skill in the art of composition, that reassure one as one gets into this book. She could be tiresome about practical matters and now that everyone has to spend so much time thinking about these matters her elaborately contrived *insouciance* is no doubt doubly exasperating, but this does not mean, after all, that she did not live in a better world than we do, a world in which she could spend more time and concentrate more effectively on better things. She could imagine,

for example, how to make the English novel become a work of art, and though this seemed to her to imply an attitude not altogether unlike the strained detachment she assumed for the benefit of *Picture Post*—the novelist might, she says, 'cut adrift from the plausible and preposterous formulas which are supposed to represent the whole of our human adventure if the English critic were less domestic, less assiduous to protect the rights of what it pleases him to call life'—it is obvious from almost every essay in this book that she practised what she preached when she commended the high priests of literature, Flaubert spending 'a month seeking a phrase to describe a cabbage' and Tolstoy writing *War and Peace* seven times over.

Mr. Robert Liddell's *Treatise on the Novel*, though written a considerable time after Mrs. Woolf's world appears to have perished, is an admirable and judicious defence of the same standards as hers. It is arranged systematically, with classifications and numbered sections, but this seems to be scarcely more than an artificial method of imposing order on a number of scattered though not the less valuable observations. He combines in an attractive manner the most lofty standards with an open-minded appreciation of very different merits in novelists, writes excellent prose, and puts out several new ideas; it is a good point, and illustrative of his unimpeachably austere taste, that the English novel, which was born about 1740, is the heir of the English drama, which perished about 1700.

What would Mr. Liddell, as an arch-critic, think of Mr. H. E. Bates? Perhaps it would not be a bad test of these alpine standards to have to judge the minor eminences of the plain. 'The landscape in the background is merely incidental,' Mr. Liddell says, but it is a decision which Mr. Bates would obviously dispute, since his characters have always had a way of drawing their life-blood from the landscape in which they are set. In *The Purple Plain* we have an R.A.F. pilot set in low relief against Burma, just as we once had the poacher set against rural England. But Mr. Bates knew England—he may even have known poachers; he may well know English pilots, but we are not convinced that he knows Burma, except that he obviously knows how hot it can be, so that the result is that the Englishman seems to have been imposed on the landscape,

very skilfully, and with immense literary artifice, but without any recognition of the fact that here the background really does not matter. What makes the Englishman what he is is not Burma, but England, and it is missing the point to put the background forward, however skilfully, as of real significance in the creation of character. However, here is the story; a pilot, who wished to die because his wife was killed in an air raid in London, quarrels with everyone else in the R.A.F., but regains his will to live because he falls in love with a Burmese girl. It would have been quite all right against an English background because Mr. Bates would have made the background do the work; here heat is helpful in explaining certain idiosyncracies, but the whole technique has gone wrong for the simple reason that the Englishman is abroad. The brilliantly realistic background, not matching or explaining character, merely makes a powerful contrast with the melodramatic implications of the tale.

Mr. F. L. Green's latest novel, *A Fragment of Glass*, would probably go into Mr. Liddell's classification:—

I. Novels which call for serious literary criticism.

(b) Novels which might have been good.

The writers had minds of the necessary sensibility; but for some reason the books are bad, or uneven, or technical failures.

This, of course, does not mean that Mr. Liddell's is to be accepted as a final classification; but there is this point that Mr. Green's satire is heavy-handed and his fantasy, in which before long his satire disintegrates, is diffuse. The notion that a cartoon in a daily newspaper could in time become such a power that all the nations of the world would be subjected to its baleful or good influence is an excellent one, not sufficiently fantastic to exclude it as a theme of a well-worked out satire. But Mr. Green does not work it out well; he should have been serious about his absurdity instead of being absurd about it. In the first part of the book *Peeper*, the character created for the strip-cartoon, is firmly established as a force in contemporary life; he is also made a rich character for satire. But, alas, Mr. Green also wishes to sustain the character in a world in which philosophy and economics are part and parcel of



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everyday conversation. 'Peeper,' Mr. Green claims, is different in spite of morbid statesmen with their crazy notions, and the politicians with their cunning stunts of party politics, and the generals and marshals, the abstruse economists and scientists, all of whom have enticed the world into savage enmities. Just how different Mr. Green fails to make plain. To the average reader he may appear to be as dangerous as any of the recent dictators, though, of course, better read, more amusing, and certainly less violent.

Even judged by Mr. Liddell's austere standards of taste, Mr. Francis King's study of childhood *Never Again* (Home and Van Thal, 9s. 6d.) is a distinguished piece of writing, felicitous in phrase, concise in expression, and judiciously controlled in its use of imagery. In a language made agreeably free of all emotional clichés he describes the acute sensibility of a highly imaginative boy, whose readiness to feel compassion for the suffering of others is at times singularly moving. It is in India that the boy first becomes aware of the contradictions of the human heart and the ever-widening gulf between reason and genuine feeling. Endowed by nature with an inquiring mind as well as a keen perception of beauty he finds it increasingly difficult to understand and to accept as normal the seemingly strange behaviour of the adult with whom he is forced to spend most of his early life. No one, not even his over-indulgent parents, recognizes the nascent poetic spirit in him, and inevitably there springs from deep within his nature a sense of loneliness that in time almost overwhelms him. Later, at a school in England, there are moments when this sense of being alone makes so strong an impact on the mind of the reader that what was previously almost indefinable in the boy's nature emerges as an intuitive acceptance of the need to be with those in whom there exists a constant awareness of beauty and a purpose in life. Without the author's skill and insight such a study might well have been nothing more than a superficial examination of the reactions of a sensitive and imaginative boy brought up in a world almost entirely composed of adults; but as it is here handled it becomes a perceptive portrait of a gentle and thoughtful child.

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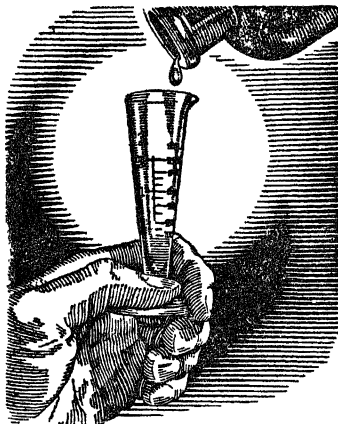
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Mr. J. F. Hendry's description of his own childhood days in Glasgow, *Fernie Brae* (William MacLellan, 7s. 6d.). Whereas in *Never Again* there is a direct communication between the boy and the reader by virtue of Mr. King's extreme clarity of expression and careful observation, in *Fernie Brae* there is no such sense of intimate understanding, largely because of an exaggerated use of poetic imagery to describe the most simple of emotions or experience. There are moments, however, when there is stamped upon the mind something of the boy's character and spirit. As with most sensitive boys he finds it difficult to adjust himself to the crudities of a mechanized age; even as a small child he was more fascinated by the incidental beauties of life around him than by the miracles of machinery. And as he grows up he appreciates less and less the gifts of a world which would, so it seems to him, reduce him to a cypher, lost in the vast complex of industrialization. So strong, too, is his dislike of formal education that he leaves his university before his mind becomes fettered with conventional learning. 'There are two ways of looking through every microscope,' he says. 'I'm tired of looking through one end only.' Not an uncommon attitude of mind in a civilized age which has made a mockery of man's liberties.

HUGH BRADENHAM

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# THEATRE

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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Produced by MICHAEL BENTHALL. Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

HAMLET. By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. Produced by MICHAEL BENTHALL. Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

THE 1948 Festival, opening with *King John*, offered as the Birthday play *Hamlet*, with Paul Scofield as the Prince of Denmark. He was followed by Robert Helpmann in the same role on the Saturday. I hope to write more fully of the Festival as a whole later on, when some of the more interesting productions have taken place—*Troilus and Cressida*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *Othello*, with Godfrey Tearle. The remarks that follow are necessarily only 'impressions', for which the printer waits as I write.

We have not lacked *Hamlets* of late, and shortly we are to see the Olivier film. It seems as if there is competition on the part of actors and producers to show that each can 'do' a *Hamlet* and it is possibly because there is some danger of both players and audience becoming stale that the Stratford production attempts to 'freshen up' by presenting the play in Victorian setting and costumes. The most that can be said for this vulgarity is that the play still comes through, but that is only because it is a good play and is no justification for the needless experiment. It is a change to get away for once from a *Hamlet* in tights, but this is more than offset by the spectacle of a Laertes with silk hat and suitcase. A *Hamlet* in modern dress is one thing, a *Hamlet* à la Dumas is another, and one which inevitably distracts from Paul Scofield's careful and, in the main, compelling performance.

This was not, I found, a *Hamlet* to take one up and sweep one away. Instead, it held, even gripped, one's interest and employed one's mind. Like so much modern art, it was intelligent rather than inspired, psychological rather than passionate; one of its merits, indeed, was the underlining of insanity. There was no doubt that this *Hamlet* was mad or, from the beginning, that he would go mad, and one of the

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problems I found it offered me was from which side of the family the insanity came; they all seemed a pretty rocky lot. Other virtues of Paul Scofield were youth, dignity, tenderness, a nervous tension, and pleasant voice. A great deal of the 'Alas, poor Yorick' speech I could not hear, and I dislike the modern technique in verse-speaking of gabbling the first three or four words of a 'famous' speech, slowing quite arbitrarily, and then 'throwing away' the full stop. The best speaking in this production came from Diana Wynyard in the Queen's report of Ophelia's death. A roaring Ghost (Esmond Knight) was an innovation which I thought poor, and the interpretation given to the King's opening speech was more than open to doubt.

The production as a whole was disfigured by cleverness; there is no call for the introduction of a sobbing Negro page in the duel-scene, which was hysterically staged, and throughout the actors seemed to be given no help in their more important exits. The Queen's drinking of the poison was badly conceived, and why cut the end of the King's 'prayer speech' in Scene III, Act 3, in order to introduce cries for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern which are not in the text?

For the playing of the tragedy in frock coats and crinolines I can see no justification at all. If the play does survive, it is despite and in no way because of them. One is constantly distracted by the fact that people in the nineteenth century neither spoke nor behaved in the way in which this play is written, and this distraction I take to be mere bad manners on the part of the producer. A more cogent complaint is perhaps that the players seemed uncertain whether to suit their acting to the words or the period of their costumes.

The production of *The Merchant of Venice* is that of last year, with a new Portia in Diana Wynyard, and a Shylock played by Robert Helpmann. Miss Wynyard takes full advantage of the gaiety at Belmont, but is at her best in the trial scene, where she gives 'The quality of mercy' a thrust rarely achieved. Robert Helpmann's Shylock is a straightforward, theatrically effective villain, but only theatrical and somewhat over-muffled in a foreign accent. His final exit is, however, moving—the only time that this Shylock is.

ROBERT HERRING

# EDITORIAL

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June, 1948

I AM sorry that I shall be out of London when the Bristol Old Vic Company bring their *Hamlet* to town. Meanwhile, we have had two *Hamlets* at Stratford-on-Avon, three new books, *The Time is Out of Joint*, by Roy Walker (Dakers, 6s.), *On 'Hamlet'*, by Salvador de Madariaga (Hollis and Carter, 10s. 6d.), and the account of the making of *The Film 'Hamlet'*, edited by Brenda Cross (Saturn Press, 7s. 6d.); finally, we have had the film itself.

Proffered this banquet, let us begin, as we should, with the lightest dish first, the *hors d'œuvre*; Sir Laurence Olivier's picture.

## I

I could forgive him almost all the tricks he has played if it were not for the death-leap at the final killing of the King. This is showy, vulgar, and entirely unnecessary, nor does it atone for the elimination of Fortinbras, of which I strongly disapprove, to introduce, as it were, Fairbanks. The whole of this last scene displays a peculiarly insensitive rearrangement of the text as Shakespeare wrote it. Hamlet's dying words, 'the rest is silence,' are tagged on to the end of the speech, 'If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart'. As there is no Fortinbras, Horatio has to speak the directions, 'Let four captains bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage.' After this, the dead body of the Prince is borne up, on and on, upstairs, to the top of a high tower. For what? For daws to peck at? We do not know, for the film ends, leaving the body up there, and, down below, the succession unsettled and no hint as to the future of Denmark.

I cannot think this an improvement on the original ending, or even an equal to it.

Sir Laurence, in his explanation of his aims (*The Film*

'*Hamlet*', Saturn Press, 7s. 6d.) observes, 'in our editing of the play, so that it would make a film of two and a half hours, instead of a play of four and a half hours, we have worked on the basis of making a new but integral pattern from the original, larger pattern of the play itself.' Later, he spikes criticism's guns by declaring, 'I feel that the film *Hamlet* should be regarded as an "*Essay in Hamlet*" and not as a film version of a necessarily abridged classic.' However, he has chosen to cast his film in the form of a play, rather than to explore the true possibilities of cinema, and so we must consider whether he has made the best use of his material. I do not think he has.

The play opens with the utmost urgency. In forty-one lines, we are introduced to Horatio, informed of the king's death and meet the Ghost. The film, on the other hand, takes a long time to get going. Mobile camera-work is not the same thing as movement, and in the opening scene, the plot remains static, while the camera reels around, rather drunkenly, showing us nothing that we could not guess; except that Denmark appears to be a mountainous country.

The slowness, indeed, is one of the surprises and disappointments of the film. Further, it is all very well excusing cuts on the plea of making a film to run two and a half hours. The fact remains that a lot of time is taken up with camera-work that could be spared. I suppose it is inevitable that we should be shown Ophelia's death, and also have a glimpse of the pirate ship; but there is surely no need to follow Ophelia along those miles of corridors to see Hamlet visiting her, to have such long processions or to have the camera swivelling with such banality round the empty chair after the duel-scene.

I was myself disappointed that, as in so many stage-productions, the Royal Family of Denmark appears to live solely in the hall and passages of a draughty castle. Here, if ever, was a chance for 'Another room in the same', and for 'A room in Polonius' House'. The graveyard was palpably 'studio' and, in contradistinction to the gravedigger's remarks about water, the grave was most noticeably dry. As at Stratford, the King's plotting with Laertes is put after, instead of before, Ophelia's burial. The cutting of Fortinbras means that all the political



aspects of the play vanish, and the deletion of both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, those epitomes of the Court, means rearrangement of the King's speech to them—

'I like him not, nor stands it safe with us  
To let his madness rage. Therefore prepare you;  
I your commission will forthwith dispatch  
And he to England shall along with you:  
The terms of our estate may not endure  
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow  
Out of his lunacies.'

Despite Hamlet's exhortation to the players to 'speak the speech', they appear only in dumb show. Both the play-scene and the duel-scene seemed to be muddled; nearly every recent stage-production, with far less resources, has handled these with greater clarity and effect.

Apart from acting ability, the age-grouping of the casting defies analysis. The Laertes looks too young to have been fathered by Polonius, whilst Ophelia could have been Hamlet's daughter. The Queen, on the other hand, could have been his wife or sister. Sir Laurence defends the dyeing of his hair blonde on the grounds of wishing 'to avoid any possibility of Hamlet later being identified with me'. He would really have done better to have had a director who would have eliminated his mannerisms, or better still, another actor. The truth is, he does not do well in the role. His is a Hamlet which scarcely moves one, and that in a perverse sense, is remarkable. He achieves this, if achievement is the word, partly by having some of the soliloquies delivered as the talking of his mind, his own face remaining impassive the while. It is, I think, indefensible; we need no literal handling of soliloquy and if an actor so doubts his ability to convince an audience, he had better try another part. Most people talk to themselves when alone, and Hamlet was alone; even if they don't talk 'out loud', the convention of poetry is that what is never 'out loud' is, thereby, spoken; poetry is the uttering of silence. At other moments, Sir Laurence arranges that he is in shadow whilst speaking, or back to the camera—this reaches its climax in a shot which could qualify for a Dover Street hairdresser's advertisement, when a glittering golden coiffure is presented to

us, whilst the voice observes "Tis now the very witching hour of night"—an unimportant but beautiful speech, which could have been cut, nevertheless, because it was only one of Shakespeare's stage-directions for creating atmosphere in a daylight auditorium.

Of the other performances, all in set style, unreserved commendation can be given to the Horatio of Norman Wooland, the Claudius of Basil Sydney, Polonius of Felix Aylmer, Player King of Harcourt Williams, Gravedigger of Stanley Holloway, and Priest of Russell Thorndike. Eileen Herlie made a brave attempt as the Queen; it was not her fault that her youth was against her or that her voice, which had the right sonority, inevitably reminded one of Martita Hunt, the obvious choice for the part.

Hamlet has terrible things to face—the murder of his father, the appearance of the ghost; his mother's marriage and Ophelia's madness. After his slaying of Polonius, he knows he is a marked man and he goes to the duel consciously as a sacrifice. Even then his cup is not full; he discovers that one rapier is poisoned. In addition to this, he has some of the most awe-inspiring and tremendous lines in English literature with which to express himself. To do this without freezing our marrow, making our hearts beat faster is, I cannot help feeling, to make nonsense of the whole part of Hamlet, and as this film is built round the Hamlet, to make pointless the film.

Finally, a great deal has been made of the use of 'deep-focus photography' in this production 'In some cases, an actor is over 150 feet away from the camera, yet with deep focus he is seen by the audience with perfect clearness.' There are, obviously, situations in which this could be of great advantage. Equally obviously, and I think more frequently, there are occasions when it is of great disadvantage. One does not always want to see people a long way off as clearly as those near one. Particularly with so egocentric a character as Hamlet, there are moments when it is essential that certain things be out of focus. Indeed, there is much to be said for Hamlet, at certain times, seeing everything in 'a general mist of error', through which isolated faces and images appear with momentary clearness.

A truly cinematic approach to *Hamlet* would, I think, make far more use of images, and I feel the film fails because Sir Laurence's use of the medium is not, fundamentally, cinematic. It may or may not be revolutionary, but one can scarcely be successfully revolutionary in any medium until its real potentialities have been explored, and that has hardly been begun in the cinema. Consequently, we have in the film *Hamlet* merely a tricky re-working of the conventional view of both *Hamlet* and of the purpose of film.

The less conventional, and I think truer, conception of, at any rate, the play, we may now examine in the light of the two latest books on the subject.

## 2

Many of the alleged 'difficulties' in Shakespeare seem to me to have resulted from the *acting* of Shakespeare having got in the way of the writing *by* Shakespeare. Though the plays gain by being seen in performance, that performance often loses by imperfect appreciation of what Shakespeare wrote. His words do, after all, have meaning; if you ignore his words, you are hard put to it to know his meaning and at once, like so many late nineteenth, and present, century critics, become lost on the seas of speculation and specious interpretation.

For the benefit of cinemagoers, Sir Laurence Olivier speaks a prologue to the film, in which he describes *Hamlet* as the tragedy of 'a man who could not make up his mind'. It seems to me, and I am not alone in this, that Hamlet had already made up his mind; the Ghost merely confirmed it. Why else, when he is told that 'the serpent that did sting thy father's life Now wears his crown', should he cry out, 'O my prophetic soul! My uncle?' or, rather, why should Shakespeare have written the word 'prophetic' if he did not mean what he said—that Hamlet knew (i.e. that his soul had been prophetic)!

Again, if he is the moody, poetic Dane which acting tradition has made him, how are we to take his threat to his companions who seek to prevent his following the Ghost? 'Unhand me, gentlemen'. Hamlet is never backward when it comes to

action; 'By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.' The arras has but to rustle and he is out with his sword; he boards the pirate ship; he fights Laertes in the grave. His indecisions come not from merely intellectual weighing both sides of a question, but from shock, which paralyses. He has had two shocks; the death of his father, the o'erhasty marriage of a mother he loves. In his first scene, musing upon that marriage, he dilates upon 'how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable' seem to him all the uses of the world. The appearance of the Ghost, confirming his suspicions and giving him a definite target for revenge, also deflects him by intensifying the horror of his mother's marriage. This is in turn increased by the cooling towards him of Ophelia.

With the mention of her, we come to a question no less fascinating than that of the character of Hamlet—what was the character of Ophelia? And here we may take up Dr. de Madariaga's book. The reviewers are wrong, I think, in deeming his conclusions 'revolutionary'; for some time they have been, if not generally accepted, at least considered. But they have never been so clearly, and even convincingly, expounded. Briefly, Dr. de Madariaga maintains that the clue to Hamlet's character lies in the fact that he was egocentric, and he quotes chapter and verse, or rather much of the verse, in support of this. It follows that, this premise granted, Hamlet could not have been in love with Ophelia—or anyone. What has always been a stumbling-block to commentators—his coarseness and callousness towards Ophelia—is thus cleared away. It is here that many readers will cavil, for it is part of Dr. de Madariaga's contention that Hamlet and Ophelia had had intimate relations. Once this is admitted, and the way is prepared by return to the sources, to excerpts from Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest, much else falls into place. For example, the otherwise inexplicable exhortations of Laertes and Polonius to Ophelia on her first appearance, and her own, equally inexplicable, calm taking of what amount to slanders on her prince and wooer; how can we ignore her father's words—

'tender yourself more dearly,  
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Running it thus) you'll tender me a fool.'

—unless, in order to preserve the tradition of the ‘innocent’ Ophelia we presume Shakespeare did not mean what he there wrote? Mr. Roy Walker, on page 39 of his *The Time is Out of Joint*, notes that ‘Wilson Knight has pointed out to me that “fool” here means “baby”’, but there is, surely, no need for any such pointing-out? Ophelia’s lack of shame in Hamlet’s obscenities to her in the play-scene, and her own confession in her mad scenes, all point to this. There is, after all, no particular reason why Ophelia should be so ‘pure’. If Shakespeare said she wasn’t, then she wasn’t, and Dr. de Madariaga makes out a good case that he did say so. Thus, also, Hamlet’s ‘guilt’ over the seduction adds to his disgust at sensuality, implicit in his mother’s marriage and in himself as child of that mother. So, too, Laertes’ sensuality (*vide* Polonius’ instructions to Reynaldo) would make him suspicious of, and aggressive to, Hamlet. Shakespeare writes of ‘the most beautified Ophelia’, and Dr. de Madariaga leaves him to mean by this what he says—‘beautified’ (‘Get you to my lady’s chamber, tell her, let her paint an inch thick’). Not so Mr. Walker. To him, ‘beautified’ means ‘*made beautiful* by the nature within which is reflected in her lovely appearance’. Again, ‘Ophelia, for whom I will contend as ardently as Professor Bradley himself, is the innocent victim of an evil she never comprehends.’

Mr. Walker, as commentator, is of the Wilson Knight persuasion. I myself, I regret to state, have found by sad experience that the name ‘Wilson’ hinders more than it helps me in Shakespearean ‘elucidation’. But though I think Mr. Walker is wrong, I know, by personal conversation with him, that he is sincere and I urge everyone to buy his, as well as Dr. de Madariaga’s, book. His approach sometimes leads him to such assumption about Hamlet and Ophelia as ‘Perhaps he manages on some public occasion to speak to her and she answers briefly and moves away’. Well, perhaps. But if you are going to suppose things which are not in the play, you can make the play quite different. You can say, ‘Perhaps the Ghost is wrong in thinking Claudius killed him,’ on the grounds that as the King was asleep, he wouldn’t know who had poured the poison in his ear. But generally, Mr. Walker is wise, and

always learned. Of the King's answer to Laertes, asking leave of absence from the Court,

‘Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will,’

he says, ‘The words subtly hint that Laertes may expect no more from the King in future. Time is all he will get from Claudius now, let him spend that well and make the most of it.’ He underlines Claudius’ sense of instability, and all this, and much else, adds substantially to our knowledge of the play.

I think I can best give an idea of what Mr. Walker himself finds in it by quoting his nearly concluding words. ‘He holds his hand until the real opportunity comes . . . To wait for that moment was not delay, whatever the devil might whisper about inaction. It was the waiting which is a struggle to attain the divine spontaneity in which humanity is transfigured into the image of a divinity that shapes our ends.’ You may make of that what you will. But you cannot quibble over Mr. Walker’s bold assertion ‘The ultimate answer is that Hamlet did not delay’. ‘Only in his weaker moments did he conceive his duty to be no more than the murder of his uncle. His innermost consciousness was struggling towards the realization of order in human affairs.’

## 3

And now, since *Hamlet* is after all, not only a ritual, but a play—back to the players. I could wish they, or their producers, would keep more abreast of recent research. We are given productions of Elizabethan plays in which actors wear long cloaks, although, after an attempt on the life of the Queen, they were for a time forbidden, even on the stage. We have Hamlets telling Osric to ‘cover’, which is senseless unless all the men at Court wear their hats, as they should. We have *Hamlets* shorn of Fortinbras, and thus missing the significance of the sacrifice, which, in Granville Barker’s words, Hamlet has ensured that, unlike him, Fortinbras ‘comes to a heritage purged of evil’. We have Victorian *Hamlets*, in which Laertes, Horatio, Rosencrantz, and Gildenstern inevitably remind one of the

sons in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* and Ophelia would have been a *Dame aux Camélias*; a period when Court etiquette would not have so short a period of mourning, when Hamlet's obscenities would not have been tolerated—in days when the legs of even pianos had to be veiled! We have, above all, *Hamlets* who do not move us at all. The last Gielgud one didn't; the latest Helpmann doesn't—it is a brilliant display of fireworks by an expert toucher-off of set-pieces. But it leaves unlit the gunpowder which Shakespeare put in the 'cellarage' of the character. It is a considered and consummate essay in the theatrical. The trouble is, the theatre was so new, so young, so alive in Shakespeare's day that it hadn't had time to have a 'theatrical' tradition.

Sir Laurence, in a way, does ignore this tradition. It is only in that leap at the end, in the insistence on prominence via white blouse, pale hair, and one remarkably gaudy doublet for a son in mourning, that 'actor manager' gets the better of him. For the rest, he trails round, leaning against pillars (they were, the book of the film tells us, on wheels, so as to be ever-ready), alternately looking like a new footman who has lost his way (the blonde hair intensifies just those bones in his face which mitigate against reflection) and a Pirandellian character in search of an actor.

In retrospect, Paul Scofield's Hamlet seems more moving than it was. He was, at least, a bewildered boy; he could feel sorrow, could go mad, could show both tenderness and regality. With a good producer, he might have done far more; Michael Benthall, as the editors of *Shakespeare Survey* (Cambridge, 12s. 6d.) rightly say, produces everything except his players. In nothing was this more evident at Stratford-on-Avon than in the way Diana Wynyard was left to make what she could of the Queen. Miss Wynyard is an actress whose ability I have been slow in recognizing. Her delivery of 'There is a willow grows aslant a brook' should have told any producer that here was someone worth directing. Instead, she was left with clumsy exits, a poor death; no build-up at all—and Gertrude is a hard part, the King is given every chance, with fine speeches, but the Queen, of whom so much is said, has little to say herself.

Ah, well! Perhaps the actors aren't to blame. Perhaps it is only the producers. But, one way or another, it is time that those who, as Dame Edith Evans once said before she became Dame, 'have the honour to earn our living by speaking Shakespeare's language, and I hope I do it as little violence as I may' should get together, and give us, once again, *Hamlets* as moving as were, in their time and their way, Moissi's, Ruggiero's, Barrymore's (on good nights!), Forbes Robertson's, Benson's, Laurence Irving's, and, of others I have seen, the Greek players at His Majesty's just before the war, and, oddly, Colin Keith-Johnston's in the modern-dress Birmingham-Kingsway production.

If we can't do this, then we have to admit that *Hamlet* is beyond us; and that is why I have devoted my Editorial, at some length, to the subject; for it means that passion, poetry, and purity of intention are now beyond us. Which I have long suspected.

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The Editor has great pleasure in announcing that in July *Life and Letters* will have the privilege of printing an important long new essay, throwing fresh light on the sources of Milton's "Paradise Lost", by Norman Douglas.



# BYRON AND EMILY BRONTË

## AN ESSAY

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MARGIAD EVANS

My dear G—,

I will do my best to re-write the paragraph. You are quite right—I need to understand it better myself before I can make it in the least clear.

But I really do try to think and to understand sincerely that spiritual habit which is what I meant when I used the word mysticism in connection with Byron and Emily Brontë. Of course it is very difficult to put into words or there wouldn't be so many attempts in all languages. Occultism won't do and Deism is certainly worse. Solitude is nearer. A singling out of *the self* among the Selves. And yes! I must stick to it. I *do* think Byron became one. That you don't agree is understandable, partly because I bungled that piece and more so because you write that you haven't studied Byron. And he needs study. There can never have been any man whose inner and outer life were in such contradiction or whose actions (until the last few years of his life) were a more complete distortion of his ethics. But this mysticism, as I call it, is the more difficult to deal with owing to the fact that now-a-days everybody has assimilated its connections with Emily Brontë, whereas so far as I know, nobody has suspected its presence in Byron. And as I am endeavouring to link the two poets, the effort becomes more involved than ever! It is however, only a part of my case, which is far more dependant upon their actual poetry, and therefore not vital to the paper : and yet I wish to retain it, for I sense it to be true and feel it to be essential. I have therefore written in two long paragraphs which are open to violent contradiction if only because everybody seems to describe mysticism differently, and to quarrel so over the terms. In my opinion it is a perfectly lucid, sensible state of mind without a convenient name. So I will not call Byron a mystic again, I will only call him a

solitude and put it like this, from the end first: Byron could not have gone on living and could not have changed again because his spirit had reached finality. It was reincarnation, only not reincarnation after death, but in life.

When the spirit reaches finality the body can't go on living. Death is bound to take it in some form or other because the active principal has ceased to guard it, and gone elsewhere on other errands. The body is left unprotected. In the manner of their dying, as in their poetry, and their expression of themselves, Byron and Emily Brontë show their likeness to each other. Neither climate nor consumption was responsible for their deaths, but detachment. Nothing could have saved them or altered the fact. Thoreau was another such 'mystic' and he died when he was about forty. It is as though such people use some rarified chemical in them for their union with what they call God, or the Absolute or Brahman, which they cannot live without. So they die.

You say that at the time of his death Byron was actually senile and that senility explains his detachment better than spirituality. I *don't* think he was senile. I don't see how he could have been without giving any positive mental or physical proof. And I have never heard that he did give any such proof. His brain was examined after death and was found to be twice the normal size, which would account for the seizure he had two months before his death without helping us to know exactly what the fit was, or what caused his death. Between the time of this seizure and his last illness he was very active—riding, walking, ordering, organizing, showing and giving appearance to himself to sustain the courage of others. Doing all this but never *hoping*. Because he knew: he knew the cycle of his growth was complete. Before *Manfred*—which like all great things was a state of development—it had been his way to throw everything pell-mell into life. After the date of his ability to write it—no. He was kinder to men and women after *Manfred* because nothing was involved any more. The Hindu is right when he says (in effect) nothing matters when you have solved your being. You're away. But does one want to solve it? Not the ordinary person. Physically it's frightfully dangerous, and there is the natural way, just to

grow and then die off, which may be just as good. Only it does not produce profound spiritual poems like *Manfred* and *Wuthering Heights* and *Walden*.

I am going to re-write the following paper, and if you read it I want you to give the words 'mystic' and 'mysticism' my interpretation rather than the usual one, out of kindness to my invention, because I cannot find other words. But you may not read it after all and I may not try to get it printed. The Cornhill wouldn't look at it, and I don't want to ask — or —. They make me feel like a beggar offering a box of matches. All that matters is to get it down somehow. Labour enough. I'm like you. I enjoy rootling about. The trouble is the moment one has finished something and let it go one always learns so much more about it. And I have the queerest delusionary conviction that I knew Byron. That wouldn't suit any serious literary magazine. But I can and will alter the paragraph. Thank you G—. Goodbye until one of us writes again.

Margiad

## THE ESSAY

### I

#### OUTER LANGUAGE

AN essay in the dark! As who is not when light has been unbounded. Light—too much, too strong, has been poured on the two figures of Byron and Emily Brontë. It is necessary to close one's eyes and let the pupils grow before we can see past the too clear delininations. Again, again and again some theoretical image, dressed for the role has been photographed for the press. Every shade, every angle has been adjusted. Nor has there been falsity—much is certainly true, more comes to life in good romance. To almost every interpretation one can admit: 'it may very well have been that.' Or that. Yet, how strange! No-one has ever connected them. I do. It seems to me that proved by their work, Emily Brontë and Byron were affinities. Neither is it a case of mere likeness or derivation,

but one of a mysterious and timeless twin-ness. The most obvious aspect of it is their language. The restless, travelling Byron and the parson's home-keeping daughter are bracketted in the energetic expression of lonely passion as no two other poets in English. But it goes behind language to that which causes and creates it. To find how deep this affinity lies, one must recount their differences . . . those differences which fail to separate their inspiration or to alter their fundamental shaping of the identical force which inhabited them. They are many and ordinary:

Byron loved publicity, Emily Brontë loathed it: Byron was a susceptible character, she a hard one. He was ornamented, she naïve—in a strong sense—and as downright as a poet could be without turning into prose. He was clever and apt, she was cleverer and unteachable. He was international and restricted, she local and world-wide. She was herself always, plain, profound, and pure and outspoken although she addressed no audience, while Byron possessed and ran through many fashionable Byrons, made false confidences about them in print, and was attracted by romance and necromance with a morbidity to which the stronger and less tragic Emily never surrendered. And here one must make a distinction between the Byrons. It is only with the post-marriage poet of 1816 and onwards that she can be matched. Take this from the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*:

And if my voice break forth 'tis not that now  
I shrink from what is suffered: let him speak  
who hath beheld decline upon my brow,  
or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;  
But in this page a record will I seek,  
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,  
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak  
the deep prophetic fulness of this verse,  
and pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

That curse shall be forgiveness—Have I not—  
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it heaven!—  
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?  
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?  
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,

MARGIAD EVANS

Hope sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?  
And only not to desperation driven  
Because not altogether of such clay  
as rots into the souls of those whom I survey?

(Childe Harold IV, cxxxiv, cxxxv)

And now Emily Brontë's Light up thy Halls :—

lit up indeed. Nowhere but in either of the two poets can such fury of arrogant and abandoned suffering be found, such vindictive frenzy of expression, although it is common in them. The poem, Light up thy halls, is, no more than the stanzas I have just quoted, good or great poetry, but in view of the likeness it is extremely interesting and worth careful study. For in it Emily Brontë employs much of that reiteration of single simple words which distinguishes her poetry and Byron's and which gives demoniacal energy to lines of otherwise ordinary lyric form :—

Then go, deceiver go!—My hand is streaming wet;  
My heart's blood flows to buy the blessing—to forget!  
Oh could that heart give back, give back again to thine,  
One tenth part of the pain which clouds my dark decline!

Oh could I see thy lids weighed down in cheerless woe  
Too full to hide their tears, too stern to overflow;  
Oh! could I know thy soul with equal grief was torn,  
This fate might be endured, this anguish might be borne!

How gloomy is the night! 'Tis Gondol's wind that blows;  
I shall not tread again the deep glens where it rose.  
I feel it on my face: 'Where, wild blast dost thou roam?  
What do we wanderer here, so far away from home?

'I do not need thy breath to cool my death cold brow  
but go to that far land where *she* is shining now;  
Tell her my latest wish, tell her my dreary doom;  
Say that *my* pangs are past, but *hers* are yet to come.'

Notice the reiteration, the stress of the italics like a yell.  
Here are both again in Byron. The relationship is so close and

so obvious that I have waited for years for someone to notice it. Ever since, indeed I read the poetry of these twin poets.

Remember thee! Remember thee!  
Till Lethe quench life's burning stream  
Remorse and shame shall cling to thee  
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Ay, doubt it not  
Thy husband too shall think of thee:  
By neither shalt thou be forgot,  
Thou *false* to him, thou *fiend* to me.

I must repeat these hate poems are not in my opinion anything mighty such as is in *Manfred* and *Wuthering Heights* but they are characteristic and doubly characteristic of their authors. They are perhaps *bad* poetry even, but they are *fey*. Was the Emily of Light up thy Halls Emily herself as she had experienced passion, or was it Emily, a prince, betrayed, standing at ebb in the heathy moor which was her imagination? I think the latter, but it is of no importance either way. The poem whether subjective or objective can be matched again for furious hate-passion only by Byron's *Incantation*. And this is a poem, unearthly beautiful and deeply, naturally realized. It is as strange and arid an act, to copy these poems which their authors wrote—Byron in the thin handwriting which was like his mother's, Emily Brontë in her tiny square script—as to wander round Newstead empty of Byron, to enter Haworth, a museum. Just for the time it takes to write them out, the lines seem as deadily uninteresting, as still as Haworth and Newstead, as vacant . . .

For many reasons I will quote the *Incantation* in full. It is not as hackneyed as it deserves to be, and it is not among Byron's superficially grained verses for all its easiness.

When the moon is on the wave,  
And the glow-worm in the grass,  
And the meteor on the grave,  
And the wisp on the morass:  
When the falling stars are shooting  
And the answered owls are hooting,

And the silent leaves are still  
In the shadow of the hill,  
Shall my soul be upon thine,  
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,  
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;  
There are shades which will not vanish,  
There are thoughts thou canst not banish:  
By a power to thee unknown  
Thou canst never be alone;  
Thou art wrapped as with a shroud,  
Thou art gathered in a cloud;  
And forever shalt thou dwell  
In the spirit of this spell.  
Though thou seest me not pass by  
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye

As a thing, though unseen  
Must be near thee, and hath been;  
And when in that secret dread  
Thou hast turned around thy head,  
Thou shalt marvel I am not  
As thy shadow on the spot.  
And the power which thou dost feel  
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse  
Hath baptised thee with a curse;  
And a spirit of the air  
Hath begirt thee with a snare;  
In the wind there is a voice  
Shall forbid thee to rejoice:  
And to thee shall Night deny  
All the quiet of her Sky;  
And the day shall have a sun  
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distill  
An essence which hath strength to kill;  
From thy own heart I then did wring  
The black blood in its blackest spring;

BYRON AND EMILY BRONTË

From thy own smile I snatched the snake  
For there it coiled as in a brake;  
From thy own lip I drew the charm  
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;  
In proving every poison known,  
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,  
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,  
By that most seeming virtuous eye,  
By that shut soul's hypocrisy;  
By the perfection of thine art  
Which passed for human thine own heart:  
By thy delight in others pain  
And by thy brotherhood of Cain  
I call upon thee! and compell  
Thyself to be thy proper hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial  
Which doth devote thee to this trial:  
Not to slumber, nor to die,  
Shall be in thy destiny:  
Though thy death shall still seem near  
To thy wish, but as a fear:  
Lo! the spell now works around thee,  
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;  
O'er thy heart and brain together  
Hath the word been passed—now wither.

Enough has already been quoted to show the extraordinary similarity of diction in Byron and Emily Brontë even to the constant use and close-set reiteration of certain terse and ordinary words—words which they invest with a vehement and vindictive purpose almost unique in letters. The resemblance is the more strange in that Byron was one of the most forthright and most male of writers, in prose or poetry, we possess! Emily Brontë of course passed beyond particular sex and the sex-vantage. How far beyond!

But before continuing to explore the significant rhythm these two great poets fall into when most passionately excited—and before noting more of their many most remarkable



sympathies of thought as shown in their masterpieces *Manfred* and *Wuthering Heights* (to such an extent that, as will be seen, Byron calls out like the prophetic echo of his unborn affinity), I should like to mention the unsound literary judgement which, overlooking the magic, harkening beauty of the *Incantation*, the wild intermittent glow of *Manfred*, the magnificent gravity of *Don Juan* (of which it is true the irony has rusted)—this *unfair* judgement I say, that reckons Byron but for a few worn lyrics as practically obsolete reading, and gives to Emily Brontë an unique place in poetry for poems which Byron has equalled, and could have written.

It is true that in very few he did write is the pure and terrible distinctness of power which is her genius: she was concentrated in it, it in her: her eternity was more clear-cut, her mind shaped, if shaped to Infinity: he was diffuse, mixed, thinned out with dubious integrity, with dubious, not admirable habits of self-consciousness. She *was* his superior I agree—but not always—he could and did equal her. There are *poems* by Byron which had they been the work of Emily Brontë would have been treasured as among the finest expressions of her genius. The *Incantation* is of them. It is Byron who is Emily's brother in inspiration, not Branwell.

## II

### GROWTH, CONCEALMENT, THE POSITION OF DEATH

Conciseness cannot achieve Byron, nor that Beethoven of poetry, Shelley. That these should have been friends, should have liked and estimated, if not respected each other, is more fortunate to posterity than the amazing chance and juxtaposition of Pepys and The Plague and the Fire of London. Contemporary opinion of an exceptionally intelligent quality is the only valuable opinion in the cases of Byron and Shelley, and this the indispensable, each was there to create for our illumination. Each according to his varying intellect was generous, and right in his estimate of the other: each disliked instinctively what was least worthy of survival. Threatened with all types of gruesome totalitarianism we do

not think affectionately of Shelley's trend towards the brotherhood of man, nor can anyone applaud the manner of debauched living, which, had it not been for his friend's humane and calm influence, might have ended in the end of Byron as a man, and possibly as a poet. But the instincts in them to become expounder and ranter, debauchee and (irony of translation) *bon-viveur* are not to be deplored or misunderstood, springing as they do from Shelley's ardent spiritual generosity, and Byron's passionate vitality. From their continued affectionate friendship through many delicate differences, and the grief Byron felt at Shelley's death, it is certain they must mutually have realized the paradoxical outcome of each other's most attractive attributes. . . .

But to return to Emily Brontë and that profounder relationship behind their language which I think links her with Byron. There is not, in their lives, similarity: in their deaths there may be, and I postulate, is, resemblance. In view of the fact that birth is the anonymous, death the individual disclosure of mankind, any likeness between persons' way of dying is supremely significant. Not so much their *way* of dying, as their way of accomplishing death.

Now in this supreme action of the ego, Death, they were alike, both showing unconcern, fortitude and 'holy' indifference<sup>1</sup> moreover: the position in their lives when death took place was the final position, the final phase, the final development. There was nothing arrested, no ends left, no vestige for return. There was in, and around, and from them, silence, the last silence.

The word mystic is more perfect as applied to Emily Brontë than it can ever be to Byron even if he died as one. For she lived some of her life as well as dying a mystic. I do not mean an ecstatic—I am using the word mystic to describe a person who consciously holds sustained relations with the absolute. Emily Brontë is revealed as such a person in her own words, Byron never. But words in this case are short of meanings. Perhaps only in its first exitable and rudimentary stages—which may last for years, or illustrate only a last dying

<sup>1</sup> Words quoted by Aldous Huxley from St. François de Sales in his Preface to Bhagavad-Gita, *The Song of God*.

sentence—is it possible for those with such intense imaginative powers as Emily Brontë's, to put words to 'mysticism'. In its renunciation of all but itself, it is like great art, and nearly all great artists possess at least some of its immense secrets. It is in ordinary people, but it is commoner among men of genius. Mozart had it, Blake, deeply, Beethoven, Thoreau, Melville. It made gorgeous George Herbert, and made planets in poetry of some anonymous 17th Century lyrics which seem to sing out of themselves, as if they had souls instead of authors. Emily Brontë is a very powerful example of this quality, revealed in her own words. To those who have absolutely no understanding of this the world's most spiritual philosophy it appears like recklessness. One cannot learn insight into mysticism: one is born with or without it. Charlotte Brontë for all her imaginative intensity was without it although she attempted to include something which she misunderstood as mysticism, in the character of Shirley, who was her idea of her sister Emily under more favourable circumstances. Favourable circumstances! Emily Brontë's circumstances were ideal for creativeness and for mysticism. Charlotte then *felt* this essential part of Emily without recognizing it for what it was, and without knowing that it was not a part, but the whole of Emily's being.

To Charlotte Brontë watching her sister's deliberate dying it must have appeared as a monstrous abstinence from health if not as recklessness. Which in a sense it was. In the same helpless part of onlookers, Byron's doctors and friends saw him disregard every precaution, and never even consider removing himself from a climate which was obviously killing him. The truth being that it was not disease or climate which was responsible for the non-resistance towards death in them, but the lack of taste for life in the high and not the maudlin sense. For the ultimate state of mysticism can be described as pacifism towards death. We find Byron all at once in those final stages without having any inkling in prose or poetry of how he came to them. And yet he might certainly be called a publicly confidential poet. He was surely one of the most expansively secretive of men. But if *Manfred* does not reveal actual mysticism, it *does* show abysses of thought sufficiently

profound to nourish and hide almost any spirituality. In it we become aware at one gasp, of Byron's capacity. We know that Shelley thought him a great man and a great poet, and we know why in reading *Manfred*.

There have been far too many researches into both Byron's and Emily Brontë's lives. The same ground has been exhumed over and over again, until their very graves seem empty of dust. These are not valuable excursions, in my opinion, except that one may learn from them that to try to keep to the grammar and text of a poet's spirit, his own expression of it, is to understand him from the one, vital and indispensable angle.

Emily Brontë, interpreted by herself, is a pure, complete and sincere mystic, lucidly declared. And there are those who would turn her inner life into some literal shape such as a love, because in her prose and poetry is the tears and the iciness of imagination, and the very essence of the *projected personalities* by which she enlarged her literal existence.

She felt herself riding a war horse. Somebody says she once sat on a pony. She felt herself a king, a lover, a landscape. *She felt herself*. The ecstasies are complete in themselves—it is not necessary to find facts within them. (But it is curious to notice how Byron actually lived to be many of the acts into which she transformed her genius by the persuasive and transcendental power of projection she possessed). The Brontës were born whole. They had only to look on the moors, learn to write, and then die, and the miracle had happened to English letters.

But Byron was in growing, a minor person and poet. When he was young—and he was very, very old at thirty-six—he had a somewhat conventionally romantic disposition and was deeply impressed by Eastern glamour and all the rather febrile sentimentality of the regency which Thomas Moore embodied in song and stanza. There is to many men a youthful and unmaturing side of themselves which delights in the boyish secrecy of certain societies and orders though these include nothing that is not simple and intrinsically harmless. Can Byron's undoubted interest in incest be considered in the same light, though not as innocent? As he grew more and more

inwardly sick of the society which had made him famous, he seemed to feel a glowering desire to tease it, shock it, and even to sever himself secretly from its ideals while still continuing to insult it by appearing as its admired image. Something escaped—a hint too much—a boast, a betrayal—perhaps all three, and the severance became complete. It was ‘go youth, and flowered weather’. Well certainly the ‘flowered weather’ was over, but the youth—he was only twenty-eight—burst out in an inconsistent glare of bitter fury against those for whom he had neither love nor honour. From this fury, from this paradoxical pain, grew Byron the poet of *Manfred*—*Manfred* in whose glowing chasms of thoughtful and spiritual passion mysterious sin stood ennobled—*Manfred* completed only one year after his departure from England but which revealed him released from triviality—a poet with conceptions far beyond the personal.

Side by side, or within the genius slowly grew, with vicious lapses into sensual emptiness it is true—his endurance, moral and physical, his manhood, his reality, until in the last few years before Missolonghi he became the patient, greatly resigned and courageous being which at the end matched Emily Brontë’s terse and saintly soul.

Her churchgoing, her apparent conformity, pacific, non-committal—to her father’s Christianity was as Byron’s worldliness, armour for the growing inwardness; sheath, not exactly of defence but of imperturbable sangfroid. Her beliefs, developed even to death, were voluntary and not caused by any outward events. *His* arrived through active and self-made suffering, which as far as can be proved, she had not to endure. She could hate—but she was never hated: she was not friendly but she had friends and she had no vanity to sting and be betrayed. Why then, did she elect not to live? The answer is that she did not. Death happened across her way, and she simply included it. There is nothing suicidal in this discussed dying. Emily Brontë was taken by Eternity—she did not seize at it. An infinite indifference to life or death leads to death. The cessation of separate existence which is the supreme consciousness of the absolute leads exactly to that. And Emily Brontë had reached this point of ultimate union

with infinity in her private existence. Emily Brontë at Hawthorth, Byron at Missolonghi, had reached the spirit's finality. Her death and not her poetry; her end and nothing else she made most perfectly presents her pure, clear, perfected personality.

Who comes to seek  
for that perfect freedom?  
One man perhaps  
In many thousands.<sup>1</sup>

She practised that resignation to good and ill, that negation of reward, that indifference towards pleasure and pain which is the core of all religious ecstasy of all times. She who adored liberty was strict with herself, that she might *be* and not *enact* the perfect, ultimate freedom. All this is declared in her poem *No Coward Soul* which is a veritable synopsis of God. To comprehend God to such an extent one must have been Him. I mean no blasphemy.

When I am not, and none beside—  
Nor earth, nor sea nor cloudless sky—  
but only spirit wandering wide  
through infinite immensity. . . .

she wrote towards the end of her life. Towards her death. All her life she wrote towards her death. And the one disfiguring flaw in her poetry is her imperfect symbolization of the death emblem—tombs, graves, in every poem that is at all inferior. And many were. This death-sensuality which is what D. H. Lawrence deeply abhorred in Christian dogma, reappears dreadfully in *Wuthering Heights*. Where being indigenous to horror, and properly focussed, it serves beauty. I shall come to it again.

Let us return to Byron. He did not mention direct religion often, but more often than Emily Brontë. When he did it was Christianity and Christianity of Roman Catholic device. He recommended it as an education and upbringing, as so

<sup>1</sup> The Song of God.

many pagans do, and he tried it for his little daughter Allegra. It appeared to him safe for women and children. No doubt Shelley's atmosphere and environment was responsible for this so-far conversion to the sensible, not the sensitive, side of religion. But of his *beliefs* we know nothing. Yet the word 'belief' is an obscurity. I never use it without feeling that I don't understand what it means: it seems to me to absorb a space which ought to remain empty—as though there were a luminous gap in the mind into which throw any word or image and both light and sense are gone. I would rather for my understanding it were left a space. For what, after all, in *No Coward Soul* and other lines and poems does Emily Brontë actually *describe*? And is not a 'belief' a description? Possibly Byron never consciously knew that he had such a side to his nature, apart from the imaginative glory of writing *Manfred*. For him it was not necessary to overcome the lethargy of a tranquil life: and so not necessary first to separate and then to submerge self in the same way. In Emily Brontë we feel self-conquest, the rush of the spirit towards its selfless enlargement and liberty: but reading Byron one has the consciousness of a man *conducted* towards such a development by incurable events which caused him intensest mental pain and turmoil.

An opinion on Byron at this date, cannot be too cautiously offered, but perhaps now-a-days there would not be too great amazement if one were to submit that in the last year of his life he became almost a perfect being. A careful study of his letters and his poetry shows a growth of personality leading slowly up to the laughing sacrifice at Missolonghi—a sacrifice as Emily Brontë's was to no cause but the soul's. No other religion, no other philosophy, can claim their ends. They had the same understanding: they had arrived at the finality of that understanding at an angle to each other, and arrived they presented totally different moods of perfection—but where

One man perhaps  
in many thousands<sup>1</sup>

is the exception the fundamental likeness holds.

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavad-Gita.

## III

## MANFRED AND WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Even in *Manfred* the most beautiful and ethereal' of his poems, Byron never attained to the pure, unadorned, unoccult force of Emily Brontë. Superstition clouded his imagination and lent it a certain formal quaintness which turned the edge of horror. In *Manfred*, in general, the symbolism is more picturesque, cloudy, Turner-like, romantic and grandiose than in *Wuthering Heights*, less homely and plain. But *Manfred* is mountain, and *Wuthering Heights* moor, Manfred intellectual power, Heathcliffe instinctive. Such likeness as there is can detract from neither; the spirit of *Manfred* sings to us through the rainbow, that of *Wuthering Heights* from the lightning.

To return for a little while to style. Never have two poets made such splendid use of reiterated, simple daily words. 'Once', 'never,' 'black,' 'iron,' 'more,' return again and again, proving Shelley's theory of the ordinary word in vibrantly emotional passages. They are like short, panting strokes of certain birds leaving the ground, like the staccato in music, and the open harmonics on the violin. I term them the natural italics of poetry, that is italics conveyed not by change of print but by stress of the same redundant sound. They hold the mind bound and prevent the escape of the ear in vague emotion. The instances are innumerable and most strikingly parallel. I will give only a few. Of Emily Brontë's we have:

- (1) In earth—in earth—thou shalt be laid
- (2) Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,  
far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave . . .
- (3) if grief for grief can touch thee,  
if answering woe for woe . . .

of Byron's:

- (1) Thou hast no power upon me *that* I feel  
Thou never shalt possess me *that* I know . . .
- (2) No more—no more—oh never more on me  
the freshness of the heart can fall like dew
- (3) Yet Freedom, yet, thy banner torn but flying . . .



and in the poems I have quoted already, more can be found, for they occur throughout their prose and poetry with passionate monotony. The effect is as if they were grinding their teeth in words, or howling and stamping as Beethoven is said to have done. And it may be questioned as to how far this rhythm is deliberate, and how far due to unliterary feeling and bitter grief. In either case there are countless other examples which anybody who is interested may find for himself, without including those in *Manfred* and *Wuthering Heights* to which I shall now, as far as possible, confine myself without curtailing the likeness.

In these two poetic dramas all merely superficial echoes of style and semblance are dissolved in the twin-ness of theme and conception. But besides this, and besides their passion, rhythm, symbolism, there is present in them, ever and always, nature as the human parable. The following spiritual paraphrase appears in two prose passages.

'Passed whole woods of withered pines, all withered—trunks stripped and barkless, branches lifeless, done by a *single winter*: their appearance reminded me of me and my family.'

This, true, is from Byron's Swiss journal of 1816. But this journal and this year were the abyss from which he dragged his tremendous mountain-poem, whole. The passage rendered into it stands thus:

'To be thus—  
grey-haired with anguish, like these blasted pines,  
wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,  
a blighted trunk upon a cursed root.'

Manfred, Act I, scene II.

'Now my bonny lad, you're *mine*. And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another with the same wind to twist it.'

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*.

In all the language of wickedness in which they excel, this speech of Heathcliff's is surely the most terrifying—its genial gentleness is Hellish. But when violent they have the same capacity for investing fury with tragedy, mere rage with an

inner ecstasy of woe. And thus it is that pity is seldom absent from their scenes although almost never taking part in them. In both *Manfred* and *Wuthering Heights*, the reader *alone* perceives that pity is owed, and becomes the indispensable and invisible actor out of the cast.

To some extent Ellen Dean and certain wild impalpable spirits of the elements, have this part to play, but they are limited in their comprehension by horror, goodness, and their unhuman quality. For in *Manfred* Byron used and depended on the supernatural as Emily Brontë in *Wuthering Heights* as positively did not. To Emily Brontë the heart alone was supernatural. Her *clair-voyante* genius, did without much, *went within* more. She saw human beings as their own ghosts, as they are. In *Manfred* there are spirits, apparitions, witches and elementals, in fact all the froth of the black nightmare which Catherine Earnshaw framed and beheld in her own mirrored face. Once dead Catherine's ghost is never actually seen, never actually heard, except in Lockwood's dream, although her *presence* is prolonged until the last sentence of the book. *Wuthering Heights* therefore is modern, and will belong to any time because it is capable of psychological interpretation: while the phantasmagorical part of *Manfred* is static and not possible to subjective criticism.

Who is *Manfred*—*what* is Heathcliff? *Manfred* is Heathcliff—a Heathcliff without that skilful greed, and with more humanity. *Manfred* is human, is Heathcliff? A question relative to *Wuthering Heights* which can never be answered is, did Emily Brontë conceive her hero as a man? Or was he perhaps seen by her as a thing not moderated by the flesh, instinct and intensified in an extra degree by the devil? Was he by any chance a physical *thought* sent by another race of another world, a changeling from Hell, natural there, but pervert on earth, who could not help changing and perverting Catherine Earnshaw?

If so the resemblance between him and *Manfred* ends there to begin elsewhere, for man as he was, *Manfred* had evidently though never clearly, ruined the soul of the ghostly Astarte.

Ellen Dean wonders: 'Is he a ghost or a vampire?' And

Heathcliff, remarks: 'I believe you think me a fiend, something too horrible to live under a decent roof.' Heathcliff's constancy is the constancy of a ghou! his love is the love of a vampire. By infection, Catherine's too. I have been surprised at the elevation of this passion by some critics into something spiritually splendid. Charlotte Brontë saw more deeply when she wrote that Heathcliff's only gleam of humanity was his half expressed feeling for Ellen Dean and Hareton Earnshaw. But then Charlotte Brontë wrote the best commentary on *Wuthering Heights* that has ever been written. Nothing will ever be adequate. Heathcliff's passion is full of ghastly adhesiveness, of an earthly-deathly sensuality which clings to the dead body, to the grave, to the ghost, to the resurrection by day and by night. And Catherine answered in the same kind: the same mutual horror rather than love drags him slowly through his days, swallows his whole life and finally sucks him out of existence. It is dual possession at its most fiendish. Both Catherine and Heathcliff are aware of it, and call themselves each other.

'I dreamed I was sleeping the last sleep by that sleeper, with my heart stopped and my cheek frozen against hers.'

says Heathcliff. (Notice the repetition of the word 'sleep' in its three forms in one sentence.)

The whole of *Wuthering Heights* is a series of such physical dreams; its goal from the first is such a graveyard peace. This is not the language of transcendent love, or of love without fleshly desire, as it has been described. If fleshly desire be missing something more palpable is interposed. But is it missing? That it is not described means little in the splendid strictness of a Brontë's art.

As Manfred's love is hinted at as being perverted, so is Heathcliff's, though in a less darkly obvious manner. The dramas balance each other in making secret the inmost secret; and in their insistent earthly cry after the dead beloved for form—take form—and speech, and life—any life. In all that I have ever read, I have found only Emily Brontë's Heathcliff and Byron's Manfred who can long like this, in words like these :—

'You said I killed you—haunt me then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers I believe. I know that ghosts *have* wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad—only *do not* leave me in that abyss where I cannot find you! Oh God! It is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!'

And now Manfred :—

Hear me, hear me:  
 Astarte! my beloved! Speak to me:  
 I have so much endured—so much endure—  
 Look on me! The grave hath not changed thee more  
 than I am changed for thee: we were not made  
 to torture thus each other, though it were  
 the deadliest sin to love as we have loved.  
 Say that thou loatest me not—that I do bear  
 this punishment for both—that thou wilt be  
 one of the blessed—and that I shall die:  
 for hitherto all hateful things conspire  
 to bind me in existence—in a life  
 which makes me shrink from immortality—  
 a future like the past. I cannot rest.  
 I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:  
 I feel but what thou art—and what I am:  
 And I would hear once more before I perish  
 the voice which was my music—speak to me!  
 for I have called on thee in the still night:  
 startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs  
 and woke the mountain wolves and made the caves  
 acquainted with thy vainly echoed name  
 which answered me—many things answered me—  
 spirits and men, but thou wert silent all.  
 Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the stars  
 and gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.  
 Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth,  
 and never found thy likeness—speak to me!  
 Look on the fiends around—they feel for me:  
 I fear them not and feel for thee alone—  
 Speak to me! though it be in wrath: but say—  
 I seek not what—but let me hear thee once—  
 this once—once more!

And Heathcliffe:

'Come in, come in. Oh Cathy do come. Oh do—*once* more.  
Oh my heart's<sup>4</sup>darling! Hear me this time at least.

Is not thus their solo vigil of life-length, paraphrased? Thus their unique, their double language of love. Is there anyone else one can quote beside these intensest passages except the other? Need one go further to show how *Manfred* and Heathcliffe paraphrase, translate, substantiate and personify one voice uttering out of one inspiration?

Surely the Byron who wrote *Manfred* deserves fresher remembrance and to be brought once more within the perspective of the reader who recognized the wonder which is *Wuthering Heights*. Women in fiction and poetry require no extra admiration, no inch of favouritism: they are and always have been in the very forefront of creative writing. Their position is far too strong for them to permit to be extended over them the least shelter of sex patronage. And yet covertly, on the very finest of them this shelter has palely descended from time to time.

Has there not been—is there not—a slight feeling still that *Wuthering Heights* is extraordinary from a woman? And for this reason has not Emily Brontë been subjected to overmuch 'introspection from without'? Overrate her we cannot—as poet, as prose-poet and as inspired genius of story: and those who underrate Byron are those who would not understand the greatness of *her* reputation. It is a strange thing, then, in view of their kinship, the yellowing of *his* fame when *hers* has remained as a fountain of freshness. No: one could not and would not meddle with her glory; but one may wonder a little at its being called unique and isolated, while its bright brother is fading behind it. And yet *Manfred* and *Wuthering Heights* are both purely original and underivative, for this is affinity, not likeness. Following the text closely one uses the word 'paraphrase' now for one, now the other, interchangeably; for it seems that neither work was subsequent nor before, but that the two were in some transcendent way, instantaneous. Byron's alpine poem—alpine in depth and view, dovetails in expression and creative impulse Emily Brontë's moorland tragedy. In the glowing gorges of the Alps the poet unfolded to the very deeps as she in her wild long landscape unfolded

herself. We are born only sometimes where we are native. The moors are Heathcliff: the mountains are Manfred, and both are Byron and Emily Brontë. He said of himself that no scene had so come home to him in beauty as that rainbow journey through Switzerland when the poem germinated.

And both *Manfred* and *Wuthering Heights* show the earnestness of inmost inspiration. There is in them as well as the parallel love theme, the solitude, the ego-projective loneliness of place, an identity of expression which is astounding. Astounding because it has never apparently been remarked! Both works are the articulate vision of a tremendous earthly love bereaved in youth and left pursuing the lacking one until reunion and destruction. *Manfred* is less complete in revelation of the tragedy, but not so in its characterization, Manfred, like Heathcliff with Catherine, identifies himself completely with Astarte.

'When we were in our youth and had one heart'

'She was like me in lineaments—her eyes,  
her hair, her features, all to the very tone  
even of her voice . . .  
her faults were mine.'

Catherine says: 'Nelly I *am* Heathcliff. He's always in my mind: not as a pleasure any more than I am always a pleasure to myself but as my own being.'

Heathcliff and Catherine are indeed so much like each other that Emily Brontë made no difference even in speech between them; one speaks not only *for* but *as* the other, from their dual soul. And after Catherine's death let him be with others as he may, Heathcliff, like Manfred, always seems alone. Who can forget Heathcliff the morning after Catherine's death!

'He dashed his head against the knotted trunk: and lifting up his eyes, howled not like a man, but like a savage beast being goaded with knives and spears.'

And this is Manfred :—

'I tell thee since that hour—  
but words are breath!—look on me in my sleep—  
Or watch my watchings—Come and sit by me!

MARGIAD EVANS

my solitude is solitude no more  
but peopled by the Furies—I have gnashed  
my teeth in darkness till returning morn  
then cursed myself till sunset . . .

I dwell in my despair  
And live and live forever.'

'it may be I can aid thee.'

'To do this thy power  
must wake the dead or lay me low with them.  
Do so—in any shape, in any hour—  
With any torture so it be the last!'

Again mark the reiterated syllables—'Watch my watchings'  
'live and live forever' which give desperate energy to the  
emotion. There is a demon in Manfred and Heathcliffe that  
gives them words to wake the dead, or if not that—though  
both partially succeed—to make spirits rise in their heavens.  
And by what a weird, dreary hush these spirits are preceded!

*Manfred* 'In my heart  
there is a vigil, and these eyes but close  
to look within.'

*Wuthering Heights* 'Nelly there is a strange change approaching and  
I'm in its shadow at present.'

*Manfred* 'There is a calm upon me  
inexplicable stillness, which till now  
did not belong to what I know of life.'

This eerie calm reminds us of Elija's 'still, small voice'.  
Emily Brontë and Byron had grasped the spirit within its  
entirety. The quintessence of this awful, hovering quietness  
which laps Heathcliffe at the end of his life is put into Man-  
fred's mouth:—

'I tremble  
and feel a strange, cold thaw upon my heart.'

Long before they were either of them to experience death  
they had guessed the change that goes before the change of  
existence.

In Act I, scene II, Manfred speaks some lines which might be Emily Brontë uttering herself.

‘From my youth upwards  
my spirit walk’d not with the souls of men,  
nor looked upon the earth with human eyes:  
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,  
the aim of their existence was not mine;  
my joys, my griefs, my passions and my powers  
made me a stranger . . .  
with men and with the thoughts of men  
I held but slight communion: but instead  
my joy was in the wilderness.’ . . .

One can imagine no more perfect description of her growth than this. And Manfred, I believe, Byron took from his knowledge of himself. Once when Emily Brontë was asked what her beliefs were, she answered that they rested between God and herself. In Act III, scene I these words occur:

*Manfred* I hear thee: this is my reply: whate’er  
I may have been, or am, doth rest between  
Heaven and myself.

If this is coincidence what are the others?

To conclude: in my opinion *Manfred* is the only work which bears a *sustained* likeness to *Wuthering Heights* in the whole of our language. As it was written of and out of the soul, and as accidents do not happen to the soul, one must admit a marvellous sympathy between these two great people parted by time and circumstance as they were.

Byron affected to think lightly of *Manfred*, but when by accident in the first edition one of the last lines was omitted, he was very angry and remarked to his publisher that he had destroyed the entire meaning of the poem. The line was:

‘Old man, ’tis not so difficult to die.’

He might have written that of what he himself had learned in Greece, and Emily Brontë at the parsonage. It was not so difficult to die.



FRED MARNAU  
CHRONICLE

by FRED MARNAU

Ambrosius, diaconus, taken unawares  
by the angels: for this youth  
night was by seven candelabra  
lighted. Fish were swimming  
in his great coat, gold upon green.  
Pagan mouths of sorcery paid homage  
to his splendour and scent of myrrh.  
But before he went to his grave, he,  
a guest in heaven, was seized  
by rebellion and horror and lament.  
He ran with his skull, shaggy  
and a wet wolf, miserable  
in his hood, measuring the gutters  
of the town: O mouths, fruits!  
O you who blind through your hell  
have driven, Ambrosius, and weep,  
and now from a dripping tin-cup  
drink your soup with the sinners:  
O your throat through which God sang.

Peer Gynt cares for no borders  
of heaven or of earth. Emperor  
Peer Gynt on the roof, of sinister  
origin: poverty and mountain peaks.  
Who slammed the door against the rogues  
in hell from the North Pole to the south  
in Africa. Peer Gynt of the old market,  
catcalled by Europe and spoiled  
by the Orient: whither if east or west  
in the end did you drive before our day  
of resurrection in your sleigh-bed?  
Then who will dance ravished before your  
resting bone-house, when the virgins,  
moved and in truth, wander at your side

on the milky way? You pilgrim and dice  
of the trinity of God, small heap,  
of earth, pray for us when  
the winged gates open for the feast,  
you crusader, you sunny cockerel.

Ex-baron Rudolph, Knight of Sacher and  
Szappany, ruling remnant,  
and the lady, his cousin abbess,  
blessed these passed nine years, gaze at each other  
through the glass of the tomb of the Sacher-Szappany  
RIP, whose vestments and bodies are not  
included in the waste-paper age, when  
more solid substance is apt to impede.  
Szappany, however, hastens not; the knight  
likes to linger; Rudolph rests on reed  
his fingers crosswise locked.  
And John the Dark, the poet  
rends the contacts of the air;  
Man at his supper hears the voice of God,  
astonished and hurt, smartly  
noting reprimand, by letter, for the next day:  
the mowers move up: the glass is getting wet:  
timber becomes dearer: Ippolytta,  
abbess, in silken shoes, receives.

*(Translated by Ernst Sigler)*

# SNOWSHOEING IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS OF NEW ENGLAND

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DOROTHY PILLEY RICHARDS

There's something in a flying horse  
There's something in a huge balloon

Wordsworth was surely thinking of snowshoeing.

But o'er the snows I'll never float  
Until I have a little boat  
Whose shape is like . . .

Or rather *two* little boats—one for each foot—and, as to shape, there are three standardized patterns. One is like a crescent moon with a rising prow and a long stick-like stern which theoretically has some rudder-like function; another is tadpole shaped, rounder and flatter with a shorter, broader tail (a 'beavertail'); and the third is the tail-less oval 'bear-paw'—best for the woods, for turning without catching in the twigs and for kicking up steep places.

On any of these you can go almost anywhere about these seas of snow—leaving a peculiarly fascinating track behind you. But you will be lucky when it feels like floating. That requires crust with, ideally, an inch of new feather-dry flakes over it to silence the squeak and crunch. Then you can really move, more foot-free than even on bare ground in rubbers. Most of the time snowshoes sink in somewhat; after a snowfall as much as a foot or more. They feel more like leaden anchors than boats. Your consolation is that without them you would be deep-sunk and helpless. (You could take a day on a mile.) Knowing this, you do feel as though you were boating, and especially when in your first careless beginner's rapture you overbalance on some snow swell. The edge of a shoe cuts down suddenly deep—and over you go.

There is much to learn about snowshoes and the snows they travel. About crusts for example. In our early days before we had been out with experts we learnt a lot—the hard way. In New England a crust can easily become indistinguishable from an ice slope. What can happen then, if you are cramponless, on even a gentle incline, has been described for all time by Robert Frost in *Brown's Descent or The Willy-Nilly Slide*.

Between the house and barn the gale  
Got him by something he had on  
And blew him out on the icy crust  
That cased the world, and he was gone!

I have been gone too and the experience is something to remember. Not quite as far as Farmer Brown, who stood, in the river road, at last, lantern still burning, and

looked back up the slippery slope  
(Two miles it was) to his abode.

But several times it has been far enough to make me wonder about the exact difference between being gone and being a goner! This was before we learnt to lash crampons under our snowshoes. Three or four spikes thrusting out through the gut lattice of the shoe, just under the ball of the foot, put an end to all these hazards. Sometimes when the fields are ringing hard the farm children put their skates on. A sight to behold! Like swallows, they swoop over the glittering undulations.

More often the softness of the surface layers is your problem. To guess rightly how far you will sink in (and how heavy the snow you lift on your snowshoe at each step) will make the difference then of success or failure to the day's expedition. Winter days are short; snowshoeing uphill is not swift; the summits are far off and lofty. So know your cloth and cut your coat accordingly.

To start with it is best to pick a gently graded trail for most of the way, even though it is longer. *Short* stretches of even really steep ground can be climbed direct (by pigeon holing, which needs a relatively light shoe *not* turned up at the prow) but this is tiring.

The White Mountains, in winter, are big enough for anyone.

The forests, climb high on them and you get nowhere without a trail. Even when the snows are so high that the blazes on the trees are sometimes buried, and the trail not a bit easy to follow, the difference between travelling on it and bush-whacking is decisive.

After a bit of travelling in winter and having to find trails you have never seen before, you wonder sometimes how you really know, half the time, which way they are turning next (this is especially true in hardwood in the dark). I think what tells you whether you are still on the trail is the feel of the snow under your snowshoes. On foot you would be waist deep, and would hardly know any difference between trail and no trail as far as the feeling goes. But trail-snow packs down a little differently, and that little seems to tell you.

Above tree-line, sun and wind have usually removed the snow and then you may get on real mountaineering ground. Ten-point crampons and an ice axe are what you want. I recall one dark night without them on Mt. Washington, at about 5,000 feet, when one of I. A. R.'s snowshoes suddenly came off and vanished rattling down the mountain side. This vast expanse is remarkably like the summit ridges of the Carnedd's, is covered with boulders of lovely granite and deservedly notorious for its vicious weather. In 1943 the U.S. Army Signal Corps, interested in obtaining tests on the performance of wind-recording instruments, which already had seen service in the Arctic, had them all virtually destroyed before the first day of winter by the majesty of Mt. Washington weather! The summit of the highest peak, Mt. Washington (6,288 ft.) boasts the fiercest winds anywhere yet recorded. Winds there can reach 200 m.p.h. and the temperature go down to 49° below zero (*Appalachia*, Dec. 1940). The suddenness of the changes of weather is unbelievable, until you have suffered them.

One June day, I. A. R. and I were damply creeping up to the tree-line with the thermometer at 90°. As we came out of the last scrub (these are said to be the oldest living objects in the world, except the big trees in California) a film was drawn across the burning blue heavens. Some two hundred feet higher, light rain and a draft oozing through the boulders

made us begin to put on clothing. A few minutes later we were under an overhang while a gale-driven deluge lashed by us. While we watched, it changed to sleet, to hail, to snow. After some serious reflection (bad judgment costs lives on these uplands nearly every year) we put on all we had and set out to reach the summit (where there is an Observatory, a Radio Station and a miscellaneous assortment of folk studying airplane-icing and Arctic equipment, who naturally are busy people and keep themselves to themselves.) Only in extremity could you bother them, and our destination was Camden Cottage, a damp shack, partly filled with silted snow in winter, open from late September to middle June to shelter tramps. Up there on the final cone of the mountain it is all plain walking and boulder scrambling, marked with shoulder-high cairns every few yards, so it is hard to believe one can be in real danger. We believed it right enough, by the time we crawled into the shell, though this was June! There is no parallel to be drawn with getting over Styhead in bad weather; wind velocities and the temperatures are different. There are times when it is physically impossible to get off the ridges to windward and the other side may let you down into untrailed forest miles away from any road.

When it is snowing and blowing too hard for ascents, the forests are the snowshoers' delight. You wander up and out with a good pack of all you need on your back. All you need includes: *plenty* of sweaters, etc. (I like a thick sheepskin-lined coat myself) food supplies, a billy to make tea in, and, not least, a ground sheet to loll at ease on beside your fire. This you may call a sybaritic pack! People unaccustomed to snows sometimes think that it must be hard to *start* and keep a good fire going in a heavy snow storm. It isn't. The forests usually provide such perfect fuel. A whisp of birch bark, a handful of thin twigs from a pine and there you are. (Beware of sparks. My winter mountain clothes are riddled with little brown-edged holes. They let the wind in.) You stamp out a camp site, arrange a snow seat up wind, put your snowshoes on it, cover them with the ground sheet, and sit down to enjoy nature and toast your shoes. Hours of idle joy can then pass before your wretched mountaineer's conscience stirs to remind you

that you ought to be going somewhere in particular! But the present beauty of the scene: the shadowy glades, the feathered twigs, the little shift and spring with which a bough lets its white load sift from it: all this, if you can keep your eyes off the endless drama of the fire, usually holds you bewitched in content until something warns you that there is just time before nightfall to pack up and trot home. Snowshoes, I think, are the most care-free of all downhill gear. On ski even a good skier seems to have to take some notice of the sort of ground he is going over! Instead of floating down.

This fireside lounging has struck you, no doubt, as a criminally lazy way of wasting good climbing time in the mountains. So the Bemis Crew—the advanced snowshoe-mountaineering section of the Appalachian Mountain Club—think. They date from 1923 and get up everything they go for (See December, 1930, *Appalachia*). They prefer to stand hardily munching a sandwich, kicking their toes and rearing to go, intent on their summit. There isn't time, it is true, in a short winter day, both to get up a big peak and indulge oneself so. I felt it a very great honour when the Bemis Crew invited us to join them at their 1946 February Meet. At the Glen House, just under Mt. Washington, it was. I learnt a very great deal about snowshoeing from them. How carefully they discussed the adjustment of snowshoe sandals with us and the relative advantages of different models. How kindly they guided us into qualities of 'fillings' and technical mysteries of sagging, as intriguing as the argument over the butterfly knot. How resourceful they were, with the great box of tools and spares, in mending our battered equipment!

We discovered that in many ways snowshoeing with a large party is a different sport from the undertakings I. A. R. and I had been venturing on together. You break trail in rotation a hundred steps at a time, or less, if the going is tough, and then, under the urgings of the conscience of the man behind you, step aside for him to pass. Red-faced and breathing hard, you wait while the crocodile goes by you, and take your place at the tail of the line, where you find a smooth-beaten track to walk on. The result is that the party can go a lot faster without risks of exhaustion. (Two people by themselves must have big

reserves of energy in hand to be safe in these wildernesses. By starting earlier and being ready to descend by flashlight, they can do the same expeditions, but at another tempo.) A long caravan looks a little and feels a lot like a caterpillar or a train pushing its way steadily up through the forest. Going quicker and more continuously, a large party can be more lightly clad. The footgear of the Bemis Crew, for example, is usually *shoe-packs* (rubber below and leather above with thick socks as insulation). We two wear the logger's felt boot inside rubber overshoes. In these you can *stand* all day in the coldest snow without ever even a chilly feeling in the toes. Warm feet are, I think, the fundamental condition for full enjoyment any time in the mountains. The soul isn't far above the soles on occasion.

The Appalachian Mountain Club is a great and strong institution. Founded in 1876, its membership of 4,948 is ever-growing; and the work it does in keeping its system of trails open and, in summer, maintaining high huts and shelters is of immense value. Also, it issues an admirable, comprehensive, A.M.C. White Mountain Guide. Its chief mountain lodge at Pinkham Notch—immediately under Mount Washington—is open all through the year in the charge of Joe Dodge, key man of the Club's field organization. It is thronged in the season with skiers, but the higher huts have only bare shelter facilities left open. Moreover, the last visitors, here as elsewhere in the world, have a way of leaving the door unlatched, however benign or shrill the exhortations not to do so. When you arrive, at nightfall, you find, as often as not, a snow-slope inside reaching up to the ceiling. There are also a large number of open lean-to shelters which those equipped to sleep in snow can use. Few, however, take advantage of them until spring. Then you may meet the strangest parties.

I remember one day when I. A. R. and I were portering a week's provisions up to Crag Camp (a hut at 4,200 feet on Mount Adams, 5,805 feet) we were amazed about half-way up to see tracks of fresh, thigh-deep, human wallowings ahead of us.

The snow was as watery as a sherbet. In snowshoes we soon overtook them: a man and a girl in shorts, their poor legs



scarlet with the friction of the ice crystals and the cold. Crag Camp is a comfortable place with beds and mattresses and a cooking range, and they would be all right when they got there. Meanwhile, our hearts bled for them, above all when it dawned on us that the young man, in the dreamy enthusiasm of a summer mountaineering novice, had chosen Crag Camp as *the* place for their honeymoon! When we got there with them, long after dark, the tension between them really does not bear thinking of. At least we couldn't bear it, so next day, the weather being kind, we left them to their solitude, and went off over the ridges. All's well that ends well. When we returned we found they had descended happily, and left us their provisions.

Another encounter lingers in my memory for culinary reasons. We had slept (late in November but snowless still) in the Great Gulf Shelter, a lean-to affair deep in the vast bowl round which stand the Presidential peaks—Washington, 6,288 feet, highest peak east of the Mississippi and north of the Carolinas; Mount Jefferson, 5,725 feet; Mount Adams, 5,805 feet; Mount Madison, 5,380 feet. It was delicious to lie there watching the fire die down and wondering which of the little noises of the night were wind rising or rat roaming. When we woke, snow was silting down out of a grey sky. But it was warm and calm, so we set off for Mount Jefferson by the Six Husbands' Trail. They belonged to the legendary Indian Princess, Weetamoo. These Indian names add a pleasant flavour to the wilds. On the other side, by flash-light and more than a little late, we found the Log Cabin (3,300 feet). Two immense and charming young men were there doing a little cooking. I would hate to suggest the size or weight of the steak they were just putting in the pan. (Our own provisions had been chosen rather with regard to the back than to the stomach!) Never were firm 'No thank you's' over-ruled so gaily. And before I woke up next morning, there was a smoking plate of porridge being handed to me by one of those smiling giants.

Such are some of the ever-memorable pleasures of the White Mountains in winter time. In Spring and Fall they have others to offer—less tense, but more varied. I have not been

on them in Summer. I have an impression that even their vastnesses might then seem crowded. At first, to anyone whose taste has been formed on the British mountains or the Alps, they seem over-clothed. The trees seem to muffle their contours. The relief was great on coming out from among them into the open—whether above tree-line, or at one of the outcrops of cliff which are known here as *Ledges*. Experience changes these feelings. You learn to value the shelter of the forests. None the less to get above them with a sleeping bag and stay above them while the weather lasts, in early Spring or late Fall, when you can have them to yourselves, delights me most. How I wish it were easier for British mountaineers to sample these pleasures nowadays and enjoy the trails, huts, shelters and hospitality of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

# A POET'S DAY

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G. RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

## I

*(Sound of the persistent ticking of an alarm clock, then the sound becomes irregular, syncopated so that the ticking turns into the playing of castanets. The sound increases in intensity to an unbearable pitch. Dull thuds are heard. Someone stamping on the ceiling of a room; someone else knocking upon the walls. The frantic noise of the alarm clock becomes regular again for a few seconds. Everything seems to be quietening down. The heavy breathing of someone asleep, and an indeterminate sigh. Then suddenly confusion once more. The sound grows louder, meanwhile changing to a three-quarter tempo, and a tune begins to be heard. 'A Paris dans chaque faubourg' (from René Clair's film 'July 14th'). Once again there is knocking upon the walls, then upon the door, and at the same time angry voices begin to call out—)*

VOICE: Shut up in there!

ANOTHER VOICE: Let people get some rest, can't you!

WOMAN'S VOICE: It's too bad being woken up like this.

VOICE: You in there, have you gone mad? Making a din like that when other people are trying to sleep!

WOMAN'S VOICE: Disgusting I call it!

*(The music has ceased, the ticking has become regular again. Sighs from the sleeper who is waking up.)*

POET: Ah. . . . What on earth are they thinking about, making such a noise all over the house at this hour of the morning? . . . Ah. . . . Just when it's so good to be asleep. What was all the noise anyway? There's not a sound—I must have been dreaming. *(Yawn.)* What a fool I am. . . . Aha. . . .

*(Regular breathing, ticking, then the ringing of an alarm clock.)*

POET: Aha—what is it? What's the matter?

*(Sound of a leap out of bed, two steps across the room, the ringing is stifled.)* Oh, that's what it was!

THE GUARDIAN DEMON: Ha! ha! ha! ha! *(mocking)*.

POET: Eh? What? Who's there?

DEMON: 'Morning! If you're putting on the light just to study my anatomy you'll be disappointed. I look much better in the dark you know.

POET: I want to know who you are and what you're doing here.

DEMON: Poor chap! I might say I'm your guardian angel, but then you're not too keen on that kind of character. Besides I'm rather more in the devil category. I'm your guardian *devil*. There you are.

POET: I'm not keen on the guardian category either. Guardian = warder, warder = cop, and I don't like cops. You'll have to explain better than that.

DEMON: All right, all right. I'm a friend. A passing friend. By night I come from the day, by day I come from the night.

POET: Ah? And what else?

DEMON: What else? Well I've just come to visit the poet, my poet. I'm quite an unimportant little devil—hardly known at all, and rather insignificant. You can tell that from my name—Arthur. The devil Arthur. You wouldn't think it, but that's how it is all the same. Arthur! You'll call me Arthur, eh?

POET: All right. Good morning, Arthur.

DEMON: Friend of poets. Good morning, my poet.

POET: Poet, poet—that'll do. And what next?

DEMON: Yes, poet! My dear man, didn't you hear how they were knocking on your door? It's because you were dreaming and your dreams were keeping them awake. How right they were to object! My dear boy, you've no right to go disturbing other people's sleep with your dreams. Understand? Unfortunately, that's just what you are going to do all day—dream. I can tell that by the colour of your eyes. Come on, have a wash, get dressed and then to work.

POET: Work? What work?

DEMON: Your work of course. That's what I'm here for. You hadn't wound your alarm clock had you? Well I set it off. And now do what you're told. Come on, come on, hurry.

POET: Very well, very well.

(*Sound of water running, of toilet articles being moved. All at great speed.*)

DEMON: While you're getting the dirt off yourself, would you like me to recite a charming little poem for you? Listen—

I set within my head  
A great many things  
I then chopped off my head  
Ah, ah,  
Oh! how rich that head  
Of a poor man with no head!

You've nothing to say? Don't you recognize it? You wrote it last night. But I dictated it! How do you like that?

POET: Shut up. You annoy me.

DEMON: Got your shoes on? Let's go. To work my boy! My boss wants to watch your little face blossoming in the crowd. My boss—the chief devil you know—says that all the fun has stopped since the poets started to engage in the ranks of the engaged. So a day of liberty will be very good for you. A day of work in freedom. Poet's work, eh? Ha! Ha! Ha!

POET: Idiot! If you think you're funny Arthur—

DEMON: That'll do. Door, keys, down the stairs quick, and into the street. I'm following you.

*(Footsteps faster and faster down the stairs. Then street noises—hurried steps, noise of traffic, etc.)*

VOICE: Figaro, Humanité, Populaire.

DEMON: Here we are old man. Did I say something about work in freedom? Freedom is over. Now there is nothing for it but to plunge into the dark void of the crowd. Do you like the Metro?

POET: You're not going to follow me around all day, Arthur?

DEMON: Certainly. And don't worry—I don't need a 'bus or Metro tickets. You saw that I didn't even buy a paper.

VOICE: Liberation, Huma, Figaro.

POET: Go away! I hate flies.

DEMON: Now, now. It's your poetic conscience that attracts them—your little pocket conscience. Come along.

## II

*(Platform in the Metro. Crowd noises.)*

VOICE: Hey, who are you shoving?

A POET'S DAY

ANOTHER: You won't get there any quicker.

POET: I'm not shoving.

1ST VOICE: Yes you are, and what's the good? You can't get there before you leave, eh?

POET: Leave? Leave for where?

1ST VOICE: He pushes people about and doesn't even know where he is going!

ANOTHER: He's forgotten to wake up this morning, or perhaps he was born asleep!

DEMON: Look, there are some people who can't understand anything. As if it were a simple matter to leave the place where you are.

POET: Be quiet Arthur. From here one might at least set sail for elsewhere.

DEMON: It is never elsewhere, old man.

POET: Yes, I know, but you can always go on hoping. Now, for example, can't you smell the tar and the incoming tide? Oh, how calm the sea is this morning. You can hardly hear it lapping against the quay side. . . .

*(Sounds of rippling water, squeaking of pulleys, ship's siren, sounding for departure.)*

VOICE: Oh!

ANOTHER: Good God! Look what's happening.

ANOTHER: Water on the track, water in the tunnels—you can't see the opposite platform now!

A CHILD: Look mummy—ships in the Metro, look at the ships, isn't it lovely!

VOICE: How the hell am I going to get to St. Lazare now?

*(Babble of excited conversation.)*

ANOTHER: I'll never get to the office by nine. The boss'll give me the sack.

*(Ship's siren.)*

POET: Excuse me sir, can you tell me where to go for Singapore please?

VOICE: What?

POET: I want the boat for Singapore.

*(Chinese music.)*

A VOICE: Here's someone who wants to go to Singapore! As if it wasn't bad enough not getting to the Bastille.

*(Japanese music follows the Chinese music. Chorus of recriminations and protests.)*

OTHER VOICES: What's it all about anyway? Where are we? Is this a dream or what? This is getting beyond a joke.

POET: Can't you see that you're in the docks at Marseille and that soon we shall be at—

VOICE: Bloody fool—

*(The sound of an approaching train begins to drown the music.)*

VOICE: The water's going! And the ships.

ANOTHER: We're in the Metro all right. Some humorist has been hypnotizing us. It oughtn't to be allowed. It's a disgrace.

A SERIOUS GENTLEMAN: I tell you, it is no longer even possible to believe the evidence of your own eyes. Science is powerless, and—

*(Noise of the trains. Screeching of brakes drowns his voice. Short pause, the guard presses the starting signal and the train sets off.)*

### III

DEMON: I got on behind you, you know, my poet.

POET: Pity. I could have done without you.

DEMON: Are you in a bad temper because people called you a fool and a hypnotist? But I take it you saw what you did? What a performance! A seaport in a Metro station. Suddenly you have the stupid idea of leaving for Singapore and *(snaps his fingers)*—there is the steamer and the sea straight out of your brain. I warned you old man, you're a dangerous character. But you're not listening. What are you looking at? Aha, the gentleman is interested in the little blonde in the lace collar.

POET: I'm interested in whatever pleases me.

A LADY: What did you say?

POET: I'm sorry—I wasn't speaking to you, madam.

THE LADY: Oh, yes you were, and I'm not deaf either. I'll thank you not to address me.

DEMON: You see when you speak to me, people think you are talking to yourself.

A POET'S DAY

POET: Idiot! Anyway, let me hear what the little blonde is saying to her boy friend. Looks a nice chap too.

DEMON: Go ahead and listen. But in a couple of minutes you'll have fallen in love with her.

VOICE: Are you getting off next stop?

POET: No madam, I'm not.

ANOTHER: Well get out of the way then—

ANOTHER: If you live in the moon you don't need the Metro.

*(Train stops.)*

A VOICE: Alfred, Alfred come on; this is Odeon.

*(Starting whistle; noise of train begins again.)*

THE GIRL: Darling—

YOUNG MAN: Yes.

GIRL: Say something to me—

YOUNG MAN: What did the old girl say last night when you got back? She didn't blow up too much?

GIRL: I don't want you to talk to me about that. Say something else to me.

YOUNG MAN: You're going to Nogent on Sunday with the family?

GIRL: Yes, yes.

YOUNG MAN: I'll go too—we'll bump into each other as if by chance.

GIRL: Yes. But it's something else I wanted you to say to me.

YOUNG MAN: What then?

GIRL: Oh darling, is it so difficult to guess? We've only a few minutes together and you stand there without saying a thing. I love you, I love you, I love you. Don't you love me then?

YOUNG MAN: Yes, of course. I say there's a fellow over there keeps looking at you—looking all the time. What a nerve—

GIRL: Yes, I've seen him. It doesn't matter.

YOUNG MAN: So that's it. You like to have men looking at you.

GIRL: Oh, darling.

YOUNG MAN: I'll break his ruddy neck.

GIRL: Don't be silly, darling. Say something nice to me instead.



POET: She's quite right you know. Go on, say something nice to her.

YOUNG MAN: Now look here you, you mind your own business and keep out of this.

GIRL: Darling—

YOUNG MAN: Who are you saying that to? You're looking at him—

GIRL: What does it all mean? I don't understand—I can't understand anything now—except—love. Is it day or is it night?

YOUNG MAN: Juliet, have you gone off your head?

POET: How wonderful! Her name is Juliet! Speak to me again of love, my angel, my nightingale, and may everything fade from around us save the heaven where you are singing—

GIRL: I am afraid, yet no one can see us, alone in our darkness.

POET: It does not matter, oh my love, whether it be day or night, whether we are seen or unseen. In our hearts there is neither darkness nor light, neither light nor death.

GIRL: I do not know your name, but they call you Romeo, and that is the name of my love. The one I love is perfect, and who can sever our embrace? Those who speak our names must be silent—they must not even say 'Romeo and Juliet' for that breaks in two the very name of love.

YOUNG MAN: Well—I dunno—she's mad, or drunk, or she's putting one over on me—

VOICE: I say, look—a lover's quarrel!

ANOTHER: What's happening anyway?

ANOTHER: I've been watching it all. It's priceless.

ANOTHER: She hasn't half got a cheek.

YOUNG MAN: In the meanwhile, Juliet, here's something to be going on with—(Slap.) And as for you, I'm going to break your neck—

GIRL: Oh, darling—what's the matter with you? See, darling—

POET: Hey! I've never seen you before—have you gone mad?

YOUNG MAN: You're a dirty rat, and she—she's a little bitch, a . . .

A POET'S DAY

VOICE: He's quite right.

ANOTHER: What do you know about it? He ought to be ashamed of himself—

ANOTHER: There's nothing to choose between the lot of them.

*(Sounds of a scuffle and general uproar.)*

SOMEONE: Oh hell, this is where we change—what a pity not to see the end of it!

ANOTHER: Let people get off, can't you?

YOUNG MAN: Come on chaps, help me to throw this fellow out, the dirty sod.

VARIOUS VOICES: Get him out! Mind the door! Out with him! Hup!

*(Train has meanwhile stopped, it then restarts. Fades into distance.)*

IV

DEMON: The world my dear fellow is a machine in which flies get crushed. You called me a fly just now, yet it seems to me that it's you who—

POET: One is always somebody's fly.

DEMON: A pleasant proverb. Well come along my potential Romeo. I'll take you somewhere where you can buzz around happily. Cross the street. But don't start thinking you're in the desert or we shall have a simoon blowing up.

*(Footsteps in the street. Noise of passers-by. Cars; sound of motor-horns during the dialogue.)*

POET: Where are we going?

DEMON: Come along. This is the Passage du baire.

*(Echoing footsteps. In the distance an accordion is playing 'A Paris dans chaque faubourg'.)*

Excellent subjects for *daydreams*, as you see, Blue, red and green shops everywhere. You might think you were in a foreign country. Ah! Stop a moment by this window, there's already someone looking at you. It might be interesting.

POET: Arthur, go to hell!

DEMON: Thank you—

POET: *(Humming)* 'A Paris dans chaque faubourg'—

M. DE BORJOLI: You're just having a look?

POET: Yes, just having a look.

BOIJOLI: Curious, isn't it?

POET: Yes it is indeed.

BOIJOLI: This place calls itself a tailor's dummy factory. And what a display—nothing but women's bodies chopped up into pieces.

POET: Yes, so I see.

BOIJOLI: When I say chopped into pieces, that's a figure of speech. There are certainly pieces—bodies with no arms. Then arms, and legs. A torso with no head and no limbs. And there—all by itself a bust—what a bust! Doesn't that interest you?

POET: Yes, yes. It interests me all right. Rather like the Louvre, isn't it?

BOIJOLI: Oh, but finer. Much finer.

POET: At the Louvre it's marble. Here, it's just painted cardboard or what are called plastics I suppose. If they were real now—

BOIJOLI: What? If they were real? What d'you mean by real? Oh, I know, people talk about it enough. They say: 'It's real.' But what is 'reality'?

POET: I don't know. But still it would be amusing to have a real leg for oneself, just like that one, shapely and seductive, so that one could reflect upon it.

BOIJOLI: You're telling me! But let me introduce myself. Adolphe de Boijoli, 128 Boulevard Haussmann. Civil servant—Ministry of Agriculture.

POET: How are you? Delighted! I am a writer, a poet.

BOIJOLI: How d'you do? It is a privilege to meet you.

*(Sound of a door opening.)*

SHOPKEEPER: The goods in the window interest you gentlemen? Please step inside. What styles interest you particularly? What is your line of business gentlemen? Tailoring? Hair-dressing? Underwear? No? Corsets? Orthopædics? Chiropody? Beauty Parlour? No? All the same, gentlemen—

POET: Don't worry your head. We aren't even murderers.

SHOPKEEPER: Sir—

POET: In that case you see, women chopped in pieces might well be of interest to us. But we are guided by another pleasure. A kind of artistic pleasure.

## A POET'S DAY

BOIJOLI: Personally, I'd be much more willing to have two or three dozen pieces of your women, if instead of being in plastic they were real human flesh. I'd much prefer them to one whole woman.

POET: Oh Boijoli, you're surely not a woman hater?

SHOPKEEPER: Gentlemen, gentlemen. I don't know what to think. I suppose gentlemen that you're joking, making a fool of me. Or perhaps you're a couple of—out, gentlemen, out, or I'll call for help. I shall call the police. Out with you and no nonsense. You rascals!—

*(Sound of the door opening. Door slams.)*

POET: How commerce destroys beauty in the world, don't you think? That man was a twister.

BOIJOLI: It doesn't matter. Forget it. But after all we've said, perhaps I should tell you that I'm engaged, to an entirely complete woman. Besides, if you'd like to meet her, come and have lunch with me. I should be delighted. Really delighted. With that please excuse me, I'm afraid I must go. Goodbye old man, goodbye.

POET: Goodbye.

*(Rapidly fading footsteps. Accordion music as before. A record links up with next sequence.)*

## V

DEMON: Aha, my dear poet.

POET: You still there, Arthur? I thought you'd gone for good.

DEMON: As likely as that you had dropped your left eye in the street!

POET: What do you want?

DEMON: If Nothing. Look! You've got as far as the Boulevards without realizing it. I'm sure you've been thinking of nothing except following women. A poet with no ideas in his head—a fine state of affairs. Society can hardly be proud of a chap like you. But still perhaps it's best for you not to think of anything, because every time you do, you create confusion everywhere. That's so isn't it?

POET: Oh—look at that little blonde—

DEMON: What of it?

POET: I know her. It's the girl in the Metro who was with her fiancé. I tell you that's who she is. You remember what she said—the picnic at Nogent. And then—oh! clear off, will you!—Hallo! I say! Juliet!

DEMON: Don't you see that you're bang in front of the Opera in the middle of the street and you'll be run over? Oh, the young idiot's not even listening to me.

*(Horns. Police whistles, uproar.)*

POET: Hi! Hi!

GIRL: Hi!

POET: Oh—*(Above the street noises which fade away come the sound of birds and the distant crowing of a cock.)* Oh! It's you! What luck!

GIRL: Oh, I thought I recognized your voice. How wonderful! Good morning!

POET: Good morning! What are you doing here!

GIRL: Oh, we just came down to the river and sat down in the grass to have our picnic. Come and let me introduce you to my parents. Daddy's fishing—taking a rest from working in the Bon Marche. Mummy, let me introduce George, a friend of mine.

MOTHER: Very pleased, I'm sure.

POET: And so am I.

MOTHER: So you just happened to be out here to-day, too? How fortunate! *(Tinkling of bells.)* Oh dear! What's that? Cows—are they cows? And I'm terrified of cows! Do you know, that one—Juliet dear, chase them away—horrid things!

GIRL: No mother, they're goats. Isn't the sound of those bells lovely? Oh George, shall we go on the river? There's a boat here, look.

MOTHER: Be careful, won't you—I'm trusting her to you Mr. —

*(Lapping of water, etc.)*

POET: Give me your hand, Juliet—your little hand.

GIRL: Oh, let me go! What if mother saw us!

POET: No one can see us now—but I, I can see you and you are beautiful.

GIRL: Darling—

POET: Do you love me, my dearest?

GIRL: Darling, oh darling—let's go farther out. You will say wonderful things to me which only I will hear. Alone, quite alone, the two of us.

*(Noise of oars, splashing of water, song of birds, tinkling of bells in the distance.)*

GIRL: *(Whispers in a low voice.)*—And now, kiss me darling, kiss me. *(A sigh very close to the microphone.)* Ah—*(suddenly—motor horns, police whistles, shouting.)*

A VOICE: My God, some people have a nerve!

ANOTHER: What's going on?

ANOTHER: Just look at those two kissing each other over there! It's better than a film!

POLICEMAN: That'll do there! Move along! Move along!

SOMEONE: Have you ever seen anything like it? Grass all over the roadway, willow trees in the gutters and a boat on the pavement!

POLICEMAN: That's enough. That's enough. What's all this about eh? I've never seen anything to touch it. You'll be having a summons my lad! Come on! Come on now! *(Violent whistle.)*

POET: Eh? What? Where's Juliet? Where am I?

POLICEMAN: Can't you see you're in front of the Opera? You—You—good for nothing—anarchist! You've got no respect for the Law! For the Law, do you hear me?

POET: I'm in front of the Opera?

POLICEMAN: Well I'll be damned! Bringing goats and a rowing boat into the Place de l'Opera without knowing what he's doing. Get out of it you scoundrel!

POET: Well, to hell with the Opera and its solemn old music. Why should that noble music not have a right to live—to live for everyone, openly, instead of belonging only to the dinner jackets, to the cascades of diamonds, the beards of old men and the shrivelled breasts of old ladies?

POLICEMAN: Come on, come on, my lad. You be careful what you're saying, because—Ah! Now that's too much—Look here you, I forbid you—I—Stop!—What's all this? Women? Horses? And—what a ruddy collection! I tell you,

stop this nonsense. Oh, he's got the whole Opera outside now. Even the chandelier sparkling away in broad daylight!

*(The 'Ride of the Walkyris' begins to be heard. It swells and drowns the Policeman's voice. Then it gives place to the 'Meditation de Thais' which in turn fades into 'Mephistopholes' aria from 'Faust' which ends in a peal of diabolical laughter. At once a chorus of motor horns, etc., breaks out.)*

POLICEMAN: If the chorus comes down into the street, we've had it. We shan't know what to believe. And half Paris in a hurry to get by—over my body if I'm not careful. Blast this pale young idiot—clear off! And you lot who are in such a hurry, drive on, drive on.

## VI

DEMON: Well, pleased with yourself old chap?

POET: All this powerful emotion has given me an appetite. I'm going to lunch with Boijoli. That fellow interests me. Upper middle-class. Enormous house. Sordid luxury. Can you smell it?—Rich squalor that's what it smells of. You don't answer?—Well now, my guardian demon must have stayed behind in the lift, so I'm alone.

*(Electric bell; door opens.)*

FOOTMAN: Sir?

POET: M. de Boijoli?

FOOTMAN: Well he is at lunch sir.

POET: That's it. I've come to lunch with him—at his invitation naturally.

FOOTMAN: Yes, sir. Whom should I announce sir?

POET: It doesn't matter. Or perhaps . . . yes. Announce Mr. So and So, poet of the first order, just as chemists and undertakers say.

FOOTMAN: Yes sir. If you will kindly follow me sir—

VOICE OF BOIJOLI'S FATHER:

When I am drinking red wine  
The whole world turns right over  
When I am drinking red wine  
I think the whole world's fine.

FOOTMAN: Mr. So and So, poet of the first order.

BOIJOLI: Well now, dear So and So. He's come to lunch.

He's actually come to lunch and I'd forgotten all about it! What could I have been thinking about? Emile, lay another place—forgive me my dear friend. May I present you to my parents: Mr. So and So, a friend of mine and a poet—

MME BOIJOLI: Of the first order? How d'you do?

BOIJOLI: My mother, my father, and my young brother Lulu.

POET: I ask your forgiveness for disturbing you in this way—

M. BOIJOLI (*father*): Not at all, not at all. Of the first order! Indeed! Very honoured sir, very honoured.

When I am drinking red wine  
The whole world turns right over  
When I am drinking red wine  
I think the whole—

MME BOIJOLI: Ernest please—My husband has this little habit of singing that silly verse whenever he wants his glass filling. Emile—fill his glass.

(*Liquid being poured, clinking of bottle and glasses.*)

M. BOIJOLI: Your health, Mr. So and So.

POET: And yours sir!

M. BOIJOLI: You are too kind, sir. Hm. Of the first order. Really. Of the first order. Have you a sword and an academicians hat, Mr. So and So?

MME BOIJOLI: Ernest you are embarrassing him. And Ludovic, what are you doing? Good gracious me, do I see you throwing pellets of bread at Mr. So and So?

LUDOVIC: Not at him, mother, but at the flies on his forehead.

BOIJOLI: Lulu—you're being extremely ill-mannered.

FIANCÉE: He is not the only one, for no one has seen fit to introduce me to Mr. So and So. No doubt Adolphe thinks me entirely insignificant. More insignificant than the word KRAB.

BOIJOLI: Oh, I had completely forgotten you. Do forgive me. . . . My fiancée, Edith Babat.

POET: How are you?

LUDOVIC: Adolphe, what's your fiancée mean by the word KRAB?

FIANCÉE: If you want to know, KRAB is the word that opens the safe at my father's bank. A nod's as good as a wink—

(*Ring at front door.*)



M. BOIJOLI: Hm. Good weather for the vineyards, what d'you say? Hm. You ought to give us a drinking song, Mr. So and So.

FOOTMAN: There is a parcel for Mr. Adolphe. A parcel from the Tailor's Dummy Factory in the Passage du baire, sir.

BOIJOLI: Really now? It must be a present sent by the Fates. Lulu, open it quickly and tell us what's inside.

FIANCÉE: Will you please tell me Adolphe, what you mean by a present from the Fates?

MME BOIJOLI: Well, what's in the parcel Lulu? .

LUDOVIC: A corpse! It's a woman chopped in pieces!

MME BOIJOLI: Oh!

LUDOVIC: An arm, a leg, a chest, and—more yet. Quite a pin-up girl!

BOIJOLI: I assure you, I've not the least idea about all this. . .

POET: For me, my dear friend, it is a symbol.

FIANCÉE: I can't bear it, help, I'm fainting, I'm dying!

M. BOIJOLI: When I'm drinking red wine

The whole world turns right over—

MME BOIJOLI: Ernest, you horrify me!

M. BOIJOLI: . . . I think the whole world's fine.

FIANCÉE: Oh, I'm dying, oh . . .

*(Noise of breaking crockery and a body slumping on to the floor.)*

MME BOIJOLI: The poor child's ill. She's very sensitive you know, in spite of her father's strong-room. Smelling-salts, Emile—vinegar—brandy. Come and help me, Adolphe. But, by the way, where's Adolphe gone? And his friend the poet? Where are they? They've disappeared!

LUDOVIC: They've cleared out all right. . . . You might think they were the criminals. . . . If these bits of body weren't dummies in painted cardboard. . . . Aha! What a family!

MME BOIJOLI: Will you be quiet! Edith's coming round, the silly child!

M. BOIJOLI: This excitement's given me a thirst.

When I am drinking red wine

The whole world turns right over

When I am drinking red—

*(A record to link the sequences.)*

VII

(*Noise of brisk footsteps.*)

POET: Hi! Hi! Boijoli, stop! You've certainly made me run to catch you up—I'm quite out of breath. Anyway, why did you run away like that? What's bitten you?

BOIJOLI: An existentialist bug! But what's it matter? Here we are at the Pont des Arts with the Seine below.

POET: Yes, yes, so I see. What of it?

BOIJOLI: I am a free man. To marry a woman you love is to be obedient to love. That's why in order to prove my liberty I wanted to marry a woman I don't love. But once she starts talking about her father's safe, I realize that if I marry her, it may be because she has, as they say, prospects. So at once I felt a desire to chop her in pieces.

POET: Wait till you've married her—because of the money.

BOIJOLI: My dear man, you are a very great poet.

POET: I've been told that before. Poet of the first order.

BOIJOLI: Quite right. Well here there are two solutions for us: a jump into the water or—

A POLICEMAN: Just one moment gentlemen, just one moment. Forgive me for making, as you might say, an illegal entry into your privacy, and consequently for poking my nose into your business. I did, however, hear what you were saying relative to the solution, i.e. to try and see whether God hadn't dropped the key to paradise into the river. I know what it's all about—some woman has jilted you, or you've lost everything at poker perhaps. Well, now look here, between friends, I tell you you've no right to do it. Society is society, and corpses who've died without its leave aren't worthy to be corpses. Understand?

POET: You're quite mistaken officer—we weren't looking at the water but into the sky. That's right, isn't it Boijoli?

BOIJOLI: Yes, as a matter of fact we were looking at the clouds. We wanted to—

POET: Soar into the heavens.

POLICEMAN: Come off it. You looked as good as drowned already when I saw you.

POET: Didn't you know that there are now so many people in heaven that they're going to put cemeteries there?

POLICEMAN: Look, what's the point of trying to fool a simple

honest policeman? Why do you look on me as a kind of pest? I desire the good of my neighbour. The happiness of humanity would be assured if we had order, and order means that everybody must think the same. But if everyone's to think the same, we can't have some people making rings on the water like drops of spittle, and others shooting off to puncture the clouds.

*(Poet whistles a little tune, 'A Paris dans chaque faubourg'.)*

You don't reply? This is not an order, but can you kindly tell me why you despise the human sentiments in the heart of a policeman? No? You can't?

POET: If you ask me, officer, my friend Boijoli is the man seeking his way. Couldn't you perhaps tell him at what Metro station he should get off—perhaps rather get on—for the Great Bear or Mirabeti? But there, he was in too much of a hurry to wait. Look at him, he's already up in the air.

POLICEMAN: Good God! So he is!

POET: How wonderful!

POLICEMAN: There's no respect for anyone these days. It's forbidden, strictly forbidden to take off like that. Stop! Stop! I forbid you to—Come down at once! I shall arrest you, I shall—Oh, the rogue, the scoundrel, he doesn't so much as look round! He's out of sight!

*(Poet whistles two or three bars of the same tune.)*

As for you, my friend, you're making a mistake taking it all so lightly. I wouldn't have believed that respectable looking people like you and your friend would be capable of walking where you're not supposed to—that is to say on the flower-beds of convention. In me, the entire police force stands humiliated. Move along, sir, move along. I prefer not to know who you are.

*(Tune in distance, 'A Paris dans chaque faubourg'.)*

## VIII

*(Café noises: glasses, saucers, etc., being moved. Much noise.)*

VOICE: Waiter, a pernod.

WAITER: Right, sir.

*(Crash of a falling body. Glasses smashed. Frightened screams.)*

A POET'S DAY

VOICE: Good Lord!

OTHER VOICES: What's the matter? An accident! Help! I shall faint! etc.

MANAGER: What has happened, gentlemen?

SOMEONE: We don't know. Something came through the roof, I think. A meteor, or half the ceiling or a man—yes, good God! It is a man!

POET: Boijoli—my dear fellow! It can't be . . . you've come back to us!

BOIJOLI: Ugh! Excuse me, I'm a bit dazed. I've come from—elsewhere. Here I can hardly breathe at all.

VOICE: I warn you, I'm not paying for my drink.

POET: You can't breathe? How do you expect to be able to breathe in here amongst these heads full of brains, the spawn of philosophers and the sweat of sybils? You don't come here to breathe but to suffocate until you begin to sparkle. My dear Boijoli, you look as though you've come a long way.

BOIJOLI: I've been far away, very far away.

POET: Gentlemen, he has shattered your illusions by falling among your drinks. He will pay. Forgive him, he was up in the moon. (*Laughter.*)

VOICE: Waiter, bring me another pernod.

ANOTHER: Vermouth for me.

WAITER: And the gentleman from the moon, what will he have?

BOIJOLI: Wait a bit. I'm still a bit on edge. Do you know that I was bored up there? Not a single human being anywhere. No one but me. And to think that I was running away from the earth just to console myself for knowing a girl whom I was going to marry as a pretext for hating her mortally.

MANAGER: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm only the manager of this place, and I'm not up to all this. I'm not an existentialist or a lettrist or a dolorist like you, ladies and gentlemen, who understand everything. In one way, I feel I'm more a realist. That's why, my dear sir, I assure you that your little difficulties as a seeker of liberty are no sufficient reason for you to smash up all the furniture of my establishment.

POET: The manager is quite right Boijoli. Yet, he's wrong

at the same time, for I too can play at being a realist, and the devil alone knows what would happen then. Just think of all this spirit of liberty floating around in the establishment of the manager of the Café des Fleurs, of the empty vase—symbol of this place—of these cooks of liberty, of this jar of liberty, this jar of liberated pickles, all engaged as far as you like. Think of all that might happen if suddenly in the Boulevard St. Germain—

*(A few scattered shots, then a burst of machine-gun fire. A few cries.)*

VOICE: Aha!

OTHER VOICES: They're coming! They're here, etc.

*(More firing.)*

VOICE: Oh! Oh! It's them! Clear out if you can!

OTHERS: This time lads it's up to us! Come on!

WOMAN'S VOICE: I'm scared! I'm scared!

*(Gun fire, noise of cars, firing then spasmodic but continuous machine-gun fire, dominated suddenly by music—a couplet from the Marseillaise—'Liberte, liberte chérie' which stops after a loud explosion followed by a scream.)*

VOICE: Ah-h-h-h!

*(A short silence followed by two or three bars of 'A Paris dans chaque faubourg' followed in turn by the prolonged sound of glasses breaking, tables and chairs being upset or moved about.)*

WOMAN'S VOICE: I'm scared! I'm scared!

MANAGER: I was indeed a little nervous myself—certainly. But you can all come out from underneath the tables and chairs, and, ladies and gentlemen, you can go on playing at engaging yourselves in life. It was merely a typical joke on the part of one of you gentlemen for whom nothing is sacred—a miserable person who sneers at everything—himself included. As if one ought to be allowed to sneer at oneself! It amounts to the same as sneering at the whole human race—shameful. And into the bargain, he has caused you in your panic to smash glasses, cups, and saucers—a shambles! Out with him at once. Outside sir, outside. That's not poetry at all, it's anarchy. Get out or I'll throw this glass at your head.

*(Sound of a breaking glass. Booming. Hurried steps.)*

IX

DEMON: Ah, well poet, you've been trying to play with fire and you're quite pale.

POET: So you know everything do you, Arthur, my dear guardian devil? But you're wrong all the same, because I feel extremely gay. Life is wonderful and I'm hungry. I'm going to have some dinner.

DEMON: Try this little restaurant here. It looks as though all humanity goes there to eat.

*(Door opened and shut. Popular restaurant. Much noise.)*

WAITRESS: One soup, one sausage and mash—making two—a seat your highness?

POET: Yes please.

WAITRESS: There's one at the far end between the old man with a beard and the little red-head. One red wine and a half of beer.

A MAN: Look Angele you little brat, when's it coming up?

WAITRESS: Since you're in such a hurry they're chewing it over down in the kitchen for you. Then you'll only have to swallow it.

SOMEONE: What a slut!

ANOTHER: Bloody little bitch!

MANAGERESS: Gentlemen and customers, you are wasting your time talking when you're here to feed. Eat, eat, eat!

*(Loud sounds of eating and sighs of satisfaction.)*

WAITRESS: And you, your highness, want the best that's to be had. Look dearie, d'you want me to choose for you? Try this. It's just the job.

POET: Thanks. What is it?

WAITRESS: Calf's head in vinegar. The best dish in the whole place. Take it like I tell you, or under the table it goes.

POET: All right.

WAITRESS: One boiled beef, one whiting, two camemberts.

POET: What's that in the middle of the portion you gave me?

WAITRESS: You want to know what that is? It's the calf's eye of course—the best part, as I said, and chosen special for you. Because I could see at once you weren't like all the rest. It's the eye. Eat it up, you'll see how good it is. The eye . . .

POET: Yes, yes, thank you.

WAITRESS: Another boiled beef, making two. One cabbage and two mashed potatoes. Three desserts and one tomato salad.

RED-HEADED GIRL: Would you mind sitting somewhere else mister? I can't stand the sight of that eye on your plate. It keeps looking at me, looking at me. . . .

OLD MAN WITH BEARD: Excuse me, excuse me, but it's looking at me too. And it's taking away my appetite. It would certainly be better if you would kindly sit somewhere else sir. It would be very good of you . . .

POET: There aren't any other seats. But anyway, to be quite exact, that eye is looking at me. I couldn't stand it myself anywhere but here. It is so meek and almost human, and seems to blink at me reproachfully.

RED-HEAD: Oh be quiet will you!

OLD MAN: Yes, I really think it would be better if—

POET: It wouldn't be the eye of your conscience by any chance?

RED-HEAD: Oh!

OLD MAN: My dear sir—

POET: Yes, it looks as though it's holding me responsible for all the sins of other men. What have *you* done?

RED-HEAD: That'll do! Shut up, you're horrid.

OLD MAN: The fact is, my friend, that your presence is not welcome.

RED-HEAD: He's disgusting, trying to show off.

(*Uproar.*)

VOICES: Turn him out! Turn him out!

POET: But gentlemen!

VOICE: Out with him!

POET: All right, all right, I'm going. I shall go into the backyard and *stare out this calf's head* if I may.

(*Uproar. Laughter. Door opens squeaking and shuts again. The noise of the restaurant stops at once.*)

DEMON: (*Whispering*). Hullo, I'm with you.

POET: I thought as much. Fine place for a conversation. But no doubt you're quite at ease beneath that tiny square of sky in this filthy little courtyard where all the devils like you can lift their back legs against the dripping walls to their

A POET'S DAY

heart's content. Yet, there is still a sky—here like everywhere else. Look at it. . . . Oh! Oh! Well I'm damned!

DEMON: Why, what is it?

POET: Can't you see? Can't you see? I wouldn't have dreamt it. Right up there—a trapeze, and two acrobats. They've put up a trapeze between the two walls and are jumping from one window to another! Oh! Did you notice how they met for a fraction of a second—

BOY: Ho!

GIRL: Ho!

POET: Did you hear the little cry they gave—just as though they were two swallows—

BOY: Ho!

GIRL: Ho!

POET: Do you hear them? A man and woman floating in the air. Lovers. I'm sure they are lovers. A kiss as they pass by—brief, so brief, and then the little cry . . . and . . . oh! they're not there now!

DEMON: Oh, they've gone home. That's what happens in love.

POET: How sad it has all become suddenly!

DEMON: Of course you'd rather they made a mess of it and broke their necks.

POET: What a thing to say! Shut up, shut up. Ah, there they are again . . . look . . . listen.

BOY: Ho!

GIRL: Ho!

POET: Did you see—that time their lips just touched.

BOY: Ho!

GIRL: Ho!

POET: Oh, how terrible, they've missed the trapeze—they put their arms around one another and kissed, they're falling, they—

*(Short silence.)*

DEMON: Well?

POET: Nothing. No nothing. They have not been crushed to death in this horrible little courtyard, yet I was sure I saw them falling. They're not to be seen now. . . .

DEMON: Two lovers old man. Two lovers. And you want



to know where they are? In the seventh heaven. That's all. Or elsewhere, or even nowhere. That is love.

POET: Very wonderful. Still, it makes me sad.

DEMON: You are tired. Go home and get some sleep. It's time you did.

*(Steps on the pavement. The poet whistles nonchalantly.)*

X

*(Sounds of the Metro—a train starting, etc.)*

DEMON: Well, we're on the way home now. What are you thinking about? The acrobats in love? Don't you wish you were in love?

POET: Not at all! Personally, I love everyone.

DEMON: Just as you like. But oh! can't you feel someone touching your shoulder? Of course, talking of love—

POET: What d'you say? Oh! Good evening, Miss er . . . I wasn't expecting . . .

GIRL: Yes, it's me! Good evening.

POET: You're alone? And how sad you're looking!

GIRL: You know why he didn't turn up this evening. It's because of what happened this morning. Because of you—But surely you understand—put yourself in his place.

POET: I'm terribly sorry.

GIRL: Why are you sorry? I don't understand. And then why have you suddenly become so polite after all that's happened? Why did you say Miss-er? This morning without even knowing me you called me Juliet. And then—oh! but I hardly dare think about it. I spoke so freely to you, it's unbelievable. And to-night I meet you again and I'd no sooner caught sight of you than I had to come up and touch you on the shoulder. Oh, what must you think of me?

SOMEONE: Excuse me you two, I'm getting off next stop.

ANOTHER VOICE: That couple look as though they've no idea they're in the Metro. They'd be half way round the world before . . .

ANOTHER: Send me a post card when you get the youngsters!

*(Subdued discreet amusement.)*

GIRL: I can't really believe it's true you love me. You said so, this morning. Why don't you say it again?

POET: I love you.

GIRL: Like that?

POET: (*More convincingly*)—I love you.

GIRL: Why should it now be my turn to lean upon you—dizzy, and afraid? I want to know what you are thinking. I want to know all about you, and you won't say anything without me dragging each word from your mouth. What's the matter? Darling, tell me.

POET: Nothing is the matter. I love you. And I don't want to know anything from you or anything about you.

GIRL: Why not? What did you say? Oh, there, you don't love me . . .

POET: It's just so as never to stop loving you that I want to know nothing of you, but also so as never to stop kissing you . . .

GIRL: Kiss me.

POET: Darling.

GIRL: Kiss me.

(*The train noises have ceased. Footsteps are heard.*)

RAILWAYMAN: What are those two doing there? They're kissing! How long have they been at it? And how long are they going on? What, for ever! Hey, hey, my young lambs, sorry to have to wake you up, but this is the terminus. And get a move on for Christ's sake—the doors are closing.

(*He laughs. Hurried footsteps of the poet and the girl, echoing subsequently along the subways now quite empty of people.*)

GIRL: Darling.

POET: Darling.

GIRL: What a business! Where are we? Where are we going?

POET: It's quite simple, we're climbing up to the surface of the earth—into the street.

GIRL: I'm tired—so tired. D'you think we shall ever come out into the night—the real night? These subways never come to an end. D'you think they'll ever let us out. D'you think they'll allow us to love one another? . . . It would be so easy. . . . They'd only need to let us have the shadows of doorways, dark corridors, benches in the park, and, as to-night, the subways in the Metro.

POET: You can get lost in the subways of the Metro. Look how long, long, this one is. . . .

GIRL: You can't see the end—and it's dark—like a tomb. Darling, I could so easily be afraid.

POET: It would be very easy, never to be afraid.

GIRL: Yes, yes. But didn't you hear a noise? Listen, listen—  
(*A hunting horn, very far off, dying away.*)

POET: But it's too ridiculous . . . all the same . . . it sounds like a hunting-horn.

GIRL: Darling . . .

(*Sound of horns, nearer and nearer, more animated.*)

POET: I don't know where this cursed Metro has brought us, but there's one thing certain, and that is that we can hear the sound of horns. . . . Now, I can understand it all quite clearly . . . It is a hunt after ghosts.

(*Horn farther off.*)

GIRL: Oh! Quiet! . . . You didn't really mean it did you, dear? There aren't any ghosts . . . ?

POET: Ghosts of misery, ghosts of happiness.

(*Howling of a dog in the distance.*)

GIRL: Oh, you don't love me. I can see it. You don't love me, you don't love me . . . you don't love me.

POET: Why should I not love you?

GIRL: You do not love me, not me—not—me—not—me.  
. . . Ah! . . .

(*The voice dies away, becomes a whisper which ends in a sigh. The sigh turns into a sleepy yawn from the poet.*)

POET: Aha!

DEMON: Good evening.

POET: Ah, you're still there are you?

DEMON: Sh! Go to sleep.

POET: Aha! What a sleep that would be—to sleep for all eternity upon the thought of love! Without ever questioning oneself. Without knowing who *she* is. Without knowing who *I* am myself. (*Yawn.*)  
Aha!

(*Sound of drawer being closed, of shoes falling on the floor. Creaking of a bed.*)

To be a man, like other men.

(*Ticking of alarm clock.*)

To keep one's dreams to oneself . . .

DEMON: You're in the public eye—count on me! (*Laughs lightly.*)

NARRATOR: At last, ladies and gentlemen, he is asleep—the poor, pleasant young man, swayed by every wind of fancy. Forgive him if sometimes you have been caught up in his dreams. . . . He is an unimportant man. . . . A man fettered by love and by liberty.

(*Accordion: 'A Paris dans chaque faubourg.'*)

(*Translated by I. Grünberg*)

## THE SECRET

By KENNETH BRIAN SCOTT

In the silences between the stars  
Between the light years  
In the black Vacuum of unlit space  
Lies the Secret,  
Is hidden the final secret  
The minus sign  
The all important negation  
That fits  
Into the equation,  
And solves the sum.  
The minus sign hid  
In the black nothingness  
of space,  
Resolves the three dimensions  
Into the fourth and fifth dimensions  
Of Time—of yesterday's to-morrow,  
But hides the secret.

# THE PRODIGAL

---

F. E. KNIGHT

ON the train from Capetown the man stared at Andreas M'Quassa's new face and made no sign.

'Andreas M'Quassa was drowned two years ago,' he said.

'That is not true!' Andreas cried.

The man shrugged. 'It is true enough,' he said; 'I knew his married sister—the one that made him do it and has now gone to live in Port Elizabeth.'

'But how should a man's sister make him drown himself?' Andreas scoffed.

'You are the one to ask questions! Hear then, that this Andreas was working at the Central Hotel. That night he was drunk on what the customers had left in their glasses, and the manager sacked him and sent him away without his wages. This Andreas also stole the manager's shoes.'

'That manager, he deserved it,' said Andreas.

'Well, then, this Andreas went home drunk, and his married sister beat him because he was drunk for all the neighbours to see and hear. Because he was ashamed before all those women he drowned himself in the river.'

'It is not true!' Andreas protested again, and again the man shrugged.

'It was a week before his corpse was found. It had remained in one of the pools in the river. But they found the manager's shoes on the bank.'

Andreas reached across the compartment and grasped the man's arm.

'That Andreas was not drowned,' he said. 'Listen, and I will tell you. It is true that the manager sacked him. It is also true that he stole the manager's shoes. It is true that his married sister beat him, and that the women stood around the door and jeered, and spat at him, and he was ashamed. Therefore he went away, meaning never to return.'

He paused, and gazed out of the train window at the brown veld, and the distant blue mountains.

'You knew that Andreas?' the man asked.

'Ja, I knew him. And you?'

'I only knew his face,' said the man, and Andreas smiled.

'Listen,' he said. 'That Andreas was sore. His stomach was sore from the brandy, and his head was sore from the beating. Also his feet were sore from the manager's shoes. But most of all his pride was sore. Therefore he sat down by the river and took off the manager's shoes and bathed his feet in the running water. Then he walked without shoes many miles.

'Later, he found a train, and he hid himself in a truck, and lay in it a whole day without food or water till the train brought him to Port Elizabeth—to the docks where a great ship lay. He went on board that ship to look for food, and instead fell asleep; and when he awoke the ship was at sea.

'The men on that ship were good to him. They gave him food and water, and a bed to lie in because he was sick. But when he was well they set him to work in the bowels of the ship where the furnaces were; and because they had treated him as a man this Andreas worked well for them, and grew strong.

'Many months he worked in that ship, and it took him to places beyond the sea, and he was happy.

'But one day when the ship was near England there was an explosion, and that Andreas was burned about the head and his eyes were closed. They took him to a hospital, and he thought it was to die.

'He did not die, for there was a woman there, a nurse, who willed that he should live. This woman, although she was white and he coloured, did not think it shame to bring him his food or even to wash his body. Because of the marvel of it that Andreas lived.

'Also there were doctors in that hospital who, at the bidding of that woman, worked miracles upon him and gave him a new face, for his old one had been burned.

'Later, they gave him clothes and money and told him to return to his own people and show them his new face.'

He fell silent, gazing out of the train window again. The man shook the hand that still held him.

'Yes?' he cried, 'Yes . . . and then?'

'I am going home,' said Andreas simply.

The man wrenched his arm free angrily.

'You are a fine teller of tales!' he cried; 'that Andreas was a poor shambling man, a sack of chaff whose mind was a whisp of straw. You are not he.'

Andreas spread his shoulders and expanded the muscles of his forearm, and smiled at them.

'It was more than a new face they gave me,' he said.

The man left the train at Mossel Bay and Andreas was glad. He was glad also that his married sister had gone to live in Port Elizabeth. For a thought had come to him, and while the train climbed up and over the mountains that lay between Delfthoorn and the sea he cherished it.

He would go back to this Delfthoorn, back to the people who had scorned him and driven him out, and live among them as a stranger. If they did not know him with his new face, neither should they know him by name, for he would take another. Nor should they know him by his ways, for he would find a job and work as he had not worked before—work with this new strong body that the sea had given him. And in his new-found pride he would become honoured among them.

To add spice to the joke he would ask them, did they remember one Andreas M'Quassa? How he would relish it when they told him what a rogue this Andreas had been, what a scamp in and out of jail, and what a drunkard—in and out of work, and how unlike this model man Joseph Kouga . . . For that was the name he would take.

But the real cream of the joke would be the moment when he should reveal himself as that same despised Andreas M'Quassa.

It would be necessary to give them proof, of course. At first they would not believe him. But he would bring his married sister from Port Elizabeth; she would know him—and if even she doubted because of his new face there was a certain mark on his body which he had in birth, and she likewise.

Then the joke would become more than a joke; it would become his revenge—his revenge on these neighbours who had spurned him and on his sister who had beaten him.

But he would forgive them. Oh yes, he would forgive them;

and they would honour him again for his forgiveness. Then, if it pleased him, he would continue to live among them and perhaps marry one of their daughters—if one of them pleased him.

Andreas M'Quassa thought all this while the train wound its way through the mountain pass and while it rushed down into the hot plain beyond.

When he left the train he climbed the hill to the coloured location and went to the house of a woman he remembered, a woman with a good house and a right sense of what a man needed to eat.

'I am Joseph Kouga,' he said. 'I come from Capetown and I need a lodging. A man I met on the train said I should come here.'

Because she did not at once welcome him he rattled the coins in his pocket.

'I have money, *myvrou*.'

She let him in then and showed him a large bed on which two children were already asleep. But she was preparing the evening meal for her man and he said: 'Also I have not eaten since morning.'

When Andreas had stayed with that woman and her husband for a full month, a month during which he had worked honestly and well and had saved his money, he said to them: 'Once when I was in Capetown I heard of a man who lived in this town. His name was Andreas M'Quassa.'

It was evening and the sun had gone down behind the hill; Andreas and the woman and her husband were seated on the narrow wooden stoep that overhung the gutter of the road. The husband was smoking his pipe.

Andreas spoke casually, not looking at the others.

'And who in Capetown,' the woman asked, 'would have spoken of Andreas M'Quassa?'

'Oh, I forget. It was a long time ago.'

'A long time it must have been, for that Andreas has been dead two years.'

Andreas affected surprise and ventured a word of sorrow.

At that the husband, who was a man of few words, grunted; whereupon the woman turned upon him angrily with, 'The



boy is dead! If he had lived to be a man would he have been less a man than you?’

The husband sighed, and puffed at his pipe in silence.

Andreas did not press the matter then. If the response to his first question had not been what he had expected, perhaps it was because of the woman’s natural instinct to go contrary to her husband.

Later, when the woman was alone, he asked: ‘This Andreas M’Quassa—did he not have a married sister who lived here also?’

The woman pounded viciously at the clothes she was washing.

‘That one!’ she exclaimed. ‘It was she that drove him to his death; and in her shame she left the town also, with her husband.’

Then, while she washed, she told him again the story of his drowning as the man on the train had told it, save that she did not mention the neighbours who had jeered and spat at him, for she herself had been one of them.

Andreas was puzzled, for the joke was not developing as he had imagined it.

On another occasion, when other women were gathered around the house exchanging reminiscences of this person and that, he said: ‘I have been thinking again of that Andreas M’Quassa, *myvrou*. In Capetown they said he was a useless scamp and a drunken rogue, often in jail.’

‘Bah! the way they talk!’ she cried. ‘He was but a boy, I said, with a boy’s spirits and not a wit of harm in him. In jail he was, yes; but what coloured man, or woman either, that could not be put in jail for some offence or other? That Andreas, he was unlucky; and perhaps a little foolish.’

‘Yet he stole the manager’s shoes?’

‘And what of that? Did not the manager owe him money? Besides, the manager had a score of shoes, and Andreas had none.’

Then other women spoke.

‘Ah, that Andreas, how we used to laugh at his pranks!’

Another said: ‘He was not strong, mind you; quite a weakling . . . but a handsome boy. If I had been a girl . . .’

A third added: ‘Weak he was, and that is why some thought

he was drunk. But *I* could see that he was not. It was the giddiness that came upon him, as it came upon me when I was young.'

Then Andreas saw that the more these women talked the more they would exaggerate. Having once praised the character of this imagined Andreas they would not now admit that it had the slightest blemish.

How had he been all these weeks painfully building himself a good character, only to find that his character was perfect already!

Truly, the joke had lost its savour . . . and his revenge had disappeared.

For if he revealed himself now as that Andreas they thought was dead they would merely say: 'Ah, but did we not say he would turn out a fine man if he had lived? How right we were after all!'

And he would continue to live among them as Andreas M'Quassa instead of as Joseph Kouga. For a change of name was a meeting with his married sister worth while?

Soon afterwards his married sister came unbidden on a visit from Port Elizabeth.

Andreas came to the house where he lodged to find her enthroned among the neighbours. He saw that she had not changed, except that she was perhaps fatter and her tongue more free. But the wagging tongues quietened somewhat when he entered.

The woman of the house introduced him.

'This is the sister of that Andreas M'Quassa, Joseph.'

'Good evening, Anna,' he said.

At the use of her first name by a stranger she was for a moment indignant, as a married woman should be. But he was a fine man, if his new face was not so handsome as the old, and she giggled.

'I am your brother Andreas,' he said.

That moment, at least, he enjoyed. It was fine to see the dismay drive the foolish smirk from her face and to hear the horrified gasps from the other women.

His sister stared at him as he stood in the full light from the doorway.

'No!' she cried, 'No! That Andreas was drowned. No, you are not that Andreas my brother. . . .' But her voice became less certain as she spoke.

For answer he rolled up his trouser leg and showed her a mark on the skin.

'You know that mark, Anna, for you have it also.'

Then the storm broke.

'So you *are* that Andreas!' she shrieked. 'You *are* that drunken good-for-nothing that I thought was drowned and for whose funeral I paid! And have you come back for another beating then?'

As she advanced towards him he retreated to the door. Suddenly the world was full of women who threatened and struck at him and cried: 'Dishonest wretch! How you have deceived us! Jail-bird! Drunken thief! You, that have polluted my house . . .'

Coming suddenly on to the stoep he turned and ran: nor did he stop running till he was out of hearing.

That evening he left the town on the train for Capetown.

# ‘NATIONAL’ BOOK DESIGN

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ALEC DAVIS

THE National Book League’s latest exhibition of ‘British Book Design’ is larger than earlier exhibitions in the same series. From fifty-odd a year ago, the number of books has risen to one hundred, giving the adjudicators a fuller opportunity to make their selection representative of the best in British book production.

The books, all published in this country during 1947, have already been seen in London at the Book League’s headquarters; they are now being shown in the provinces under the auspices of the Arts Council,<sup>1</sup> in the U.S.A. by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, and in other countries overseas by the British Council. Many readers of *Life and Letters* will have the chance to see the exhibition; and any whose hearts warm, whose fingers itch, at the sight of a well-planned page no doubt will see it, with or without recommendation from me.

The large number of books selected makes commentary difficult. To generalize about them would be platitudinous; to mention them all individually would require more space than is available. My comments must be restricted to a few books chosen neither as the best nor as the worst in the exhibition, but because, for one reason or another, they interested me.

First, the Folio Society’s edition of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*—notable for its fresh presentation of a familiar subject. Each page has as its heading a line-block illustration by Reynolds Stone, printed in olive green.

Then there is Faber’s *Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear* which, instead of wasting Barnett Freedman’s gay dust-jacket design by using it on the dust-jacket alone, repeats it on the cloth cover of the book.

<sup>1</sup> At Stafford, commencing 22nd May; Nuneaton, 12th June; Glasgow, 6th July; Margate, 30th July; Kettering, 23rd August; in Wales, 15th September; at Harrogate, 9th October; Leeds, 10th November; Chester, 7th December.

*Science in Transition*, published by Christopher Johnson, seems to have the aptest possible jacket for a technical book; wording in bold and extra-bold Gill Sans, reversed white against a black background, with no decoration except rules in brown. (On the other hand, I thought the jackets of Walter de la Mare's *Collected Stories for Children* and the Thorndike Junior Dictionary were marred by poor lettering; the former, not the kind of lettering I like; the latter, just plain bad.)

*This Wild Company*, published by Edmund Ward of Leicester, serves as a reminder that even in this age of over-centralization there *are* good publishers in the provinces. The book is also printed and bound by a Leicester firm, Raithby Lawrence, whose printing of the photographic plates won the epithet 'brilliant' from one of the judges.

The Faber books, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Fishing: Fact or Fantasy*, I find pleasant because of the cream-coloured surface on which they are printed (Basingwerk Parchment and antique wove respectively). In these days when really pleasant white papers are scarce, publishers might make more use of these toned papers than they do. They are easy on the eyes—both literally and metaphorically.

The *Poems from Leopardi*, published by John Lehmann and printed by Shenval Press, shows a delightfully formal title-page set in a formal type-face, Bell. *Patrick Geddes in India*, printed, bound, and published by Lund Humphries, I thought one of the most delightful books in the whole exhibition, with text and headings in Perpetua type, illustrated by line drawings in the text pages and half-tone plates on art paper.

The National Book League's catalogue of the exhibition is not, unfortunately, beyond criticism. It may be amusing to see the London printing-house of Fosh and Cross gallicized into Foch and Cross, but it is not so amusing to realize that once again, among credits to authors, illustrators, publishers, printers, binders, blockmakers, type-suppliers, and paper-makers, the designers' names are not mentioned. And this is an exhibition of book *design*!

\* \* \* \*

By listing alphabetically the publishers of the selected books, the catalogue makes painfully evident the unrepresentative

nature of the exhibition. I wrote above of the adjudicators' opportunity to make their selection representative. I cannot honestly say that the opportunity has been seized. Of the one hundred books displayed, fourteen come from Faber and Faber and ten from the Cambridge University Press: nearly a quarter of the total, in other words, from *two* publishers.

There is a note in the catalogue to the effect that this disproportion 'must be taken as evidence of the adjudicators' impartiality'—a line of reasoning which, to say the least, I find hard to follow. I cannot believe that the publishers represented in this exhibition were the only ones who produced during 1947 books that were worthy of inclusion.

It may be that many publishers are not represented because they did not submit books at all. If that has happened, it suggests that the National Book League, or its two-man selection committee, has not enjoyed the fullest confidence of the publishing houses. I can think of no other reason that would adequately explain the absence from 'British Book Design' of books published by the Oxford University Press, Batsford, Chatto and Windus, Cresset Press, Heinemann, Sylvan Press, Paul Elek, Robert Hale, Gollancz . . . These are names that come readily to mind when one thinks of publishers whose work is respected for its design as well as its literary merit; not one of them is represented by a single book in the selection which the League now presents to the puzzled gaze of the world's bookmen.

# REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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## THE MAKING OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

M. S. GEEN. Longmans. 11s. 6d.

Not all South African schoolmasters can say with the author of this book that they have been 'allowed a free hand in the teaching of history'. Not all, given that freedom, would exercise his impartiality.

This is not to say that the teaching of history in South African schools is generally biased politically, but rather that the significance of events leading up to to-day's controversies is ignored. Thus many of South Africa's future citizens are familiar with every detail of the early discoveries, can even name the plants with which Van Riebeeck started his garden at the Cape; yet are ignorant of the cataclysm through which British rule supplanted Dutch, of the forces of nineteenth century liberalism which caused that British rule to take the form it did, or of the change in South Africa's importance in the world which was brought about by the development of her mineral wealth.

Mr. Geen's readers should have no such delusions. He shows the early centuries as a distant backcloth to the stage on which the events of modern history are presented. They are presented factually, and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. They are presented with a wealth of detail which in this slim volume of some two hundred pages, pays tribute to the author's economy of words; for the book is more than a mere catalogue of events.

A chapter is devoted to a statement of South Africa's problems of to-day. Here the author does depart from strict impartiality, stating with refreshing frankness his own views on some of them, notably the question of the coloured population. One feels that at least his view has the support of history; but to be fair with his readers he states the opposition case also.

Another chapter surveys South Africa's cultural developments—in the visual arts, literature, architecture. An omission in this chapter would appear to be any reference to music.

This history is intended primarily for South African

readers, and one would like to think that eventually it might find its way into the hands of all teachers of South African history. But it should also have a wide appeal to all who have an interest in and would like to know more of this great Dominion.

I have one small criticism: it would have helped non-South African readers had the author explained on first mentioning them such matters as the effect of Roman Dutch law on land inheritance, and such words as *bywoner*. An index would also have been an asset.

F. E. KNIGHT

THE GREEN CONTINENT. GERMÁN ARCINIEGAS. Poetry, London. 15s.

'A CLASSIC can only occur when a civilization is mature; when a language and literature are mature; and it must be the work of a mature mind.' *The Green Continent* edited by German Arciniegas is, I believe, a comprehensive picture of the Latin-American mind. This anthology of selections from the writings of more than thirty Latin-American authors depict an aspect of the Americas which is all too often ignored or overlooked in this country: that besides the exuberance and growing pains undergone by a young continent, there is a maturity of mind which is slowly but nevertheless surely making an impression on the mass of the people. When one considers that Brazil alone has an area larger than that of the U.S.A. and is only a little smaller than the continent of Europe, that South America is much broader than the Atlantic Ocean it faces, one begins to realize the stupendous size of this Green Continent and the difficulties which must, perforce, beset it. Add to this the mixture of races and the picture becomes even more confused. For in South America there is the mestizo, the man whose blood is half white and half Indian; the mulatto, half black and half white; and the zambo who is half negro and half Indian. With this in mind the ordinary European reader will begin to understand and appreciate Madariaga's description of the mestizo.

'Nothing is more complex than the soul of the mestizo. Compared with it, the subtlest soul of a pure blood—white,



black or Indian—is as transparent as water. The typical feature of the mestizo soul is its swift-changing hue, calling to mind those iridescent tinctures or shot silks which change from green to blue and react to the slightest movement in the incidence of light.' How then can South America fail to fascinate?

Doctor Arciniegas has done a most valuable piece of work in giving us a picture of Latin America by its leading authors. All aspects of the Americas are represented. From this will be seen how irresistible Latin America is. It will also be realized that along with its savage beauty of landscape, and prosperous modern cities, Latin America possesses a maturity of mind which is remarkable for so young a people. True, this element does not always predominate. Yet it is of the utmost importance to realize that this maturity is worthy of the greatest of civilizations.

To-day it is important for people over here to learn about the Americas. *The Green Continent* speaks for itself, for it is infinitely more illuminating than any 'digest' or commentary by a foreign observer. Dr. Arciniegas has chosen a wide selection of pieces. He has also written an extremely interesting and valuable introduction. He has kept faithfully to his aim, to reveal fully what the peoples of Latin America are like. He has succeeded admirably.

It is said of the Americas that people from all over the world went to these lands in search of the justice and freedom which Europe could not always, or hardly ever, offer its children. To read the *Green Continent* is to make such a visit. For in the words of America's great liberator Bolivar: 'the freedom of America is the hope of the world.'

MIRIAM BLANCO-FOMBONA

SPEARHEAD. ED. JAMES LAUGHLIN. New Directions.  
(Distributed by Falcon Press.)

THE KID. CONRAD AIKEN. John Lehmann. 5s.

THERE is a pathetic determination in experimental writing; a purposeful and continuous statement of uniqueness; a bold, but often unconvincing reiteration of damnation to tradition. In American modernism the wail is double-voiced, for, not

only must it proclaim the Twentieth Century, but also it must deny any connection with English origins and with those aspects of American literature that are obviously and unashamedly derivative.

James Laughlin's commemorative anthology records ten years of New Directions devotion to this experimental movement in America. The editor admits that *Spearhead* is not a collection of the best of all types of fiction and poetry produced by Americans between 1936 and 1947. His chosen companions, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Robert Penn Warren and the rest, are, he claims, a vanguard, but though he flashes a signal of friendship toward the traditionalists, he implies that American literature must and will follow his spearhead into action.

No one can quarrel with his assertion that the commercial publishing of books in the United States (as in England) is becoming 'more and more an industry and less and less the nourishing of an art'. But it is less certain that the solution is with his advance guard. Vulgarly cannot be combated with incomprehensibles; the tradition is not necessarily at fault because it has been prostituted. Laughlin's writers, and in this Paul Goodman, Tennessee Williams, and Djuna Barnes must be excepted, do not even attempt to raise the standard of content in literature, they merely wrestle with technique. A false sounding disclaimer associates the New Directions movement with Nineteenth Century Romanticism, but the romantics were important for much more than technical innovation. Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley were a spearhead, but they urged thoughtfulness on their readers and never denied the comprehension of their audience. Unless readers are prepared to discard the convention of syntax and meaning, the whole movement must satisfy itself with preaching to the converted and writing for writers to read.

James Laughlin has always shown courage, and the catalytic value of his experimental group is undeniable, but it is fortunate that his is not the only standard by which to judge American literature. Conrad Aiken, a healthier exemplar, belongs rather to the opposing faction. He too has been consistently dissatisfied with the intellectual ability of his

# UNWIN

## History of Western Philosophy

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Further supplies of this great book are once more available. You are advised to obtain your copy at once. 'The best history of philosophy in English.'—*Life and Letters*. 21s. net

## I Believe

*A Book of Living Philosophies by Twenty-Three Eminent Personalities including* BERTRAND RUSSELL, SIR ARTHUR KEITH, LIN YUTANG and H. G. WELLS. 'Through all of them breathes the very spirit of freedom.'—*Aberdeen Press and Journal*.

4th impression. 15s. net

## Windfalls

R. C. TREVELYAN

'A charming collection of notes and essays written with grace, humour and scholarship.'—*News Chronicle*. 'Their style is a model of clarity, ease and harmony.'—DESMOND MACCARTHY in *The Sunday Times*. 2nd impression. 10s. 6d. net

## Mr Derelict

LIU NGO

A vivid picture of Chinese society of the early twentieth century is given in this delightful translation by H. Y. YANG and G. M. TAYLOR of a famous Chinese novel. The character of Mr. Derelict, a wandering physician, is an autobiographical sketch and expresses Liu Ngo's sorrow at the decadence of China. 7s. 6d. net

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audience, and though he is one of the most lyrical and, in some senses, one of the simplest of modern poets, his demands upon the mental energy of his readers have been so stern that he has never won the popularity he has always deserved. Yet he has remained loyal to traditional form; some would even say that he has been too facilely derivative. His first book of poems, *Earth Triumphant* echoed Keats, he swung to the tune of Masters and then of Eliot, and now, in *The Kid*, much in subject and somewhat in form, to the trumpet call of Stephen Vincent Benet.

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#### ENGLISH LITERARY CRITICISM: THE RENASCENCE. J. W. H. ATKINS. Methuen. 16s.

Appreciation and criticism are, of course, two aspects of a larger process, but such an attempt we witness. Having uncertain feelings about what they read, insofar as they considered it as literature, men, in the early days of printed literature in England, were obliged to cast about their memories for any odd pronouncements on the subject and to use these as a measuring-rod for what ought to be. The story of English Literary Criticism in the renaissance is the story of how men shook themselves free of dogma to arrive at clear ideas about literature and how it might be judged. An independent standpoint once attained, they were then able to re-assess the original dogma, apply it only where it was relevant, and set

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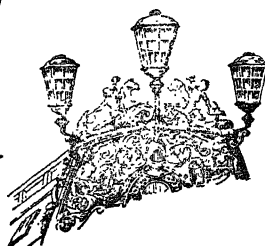
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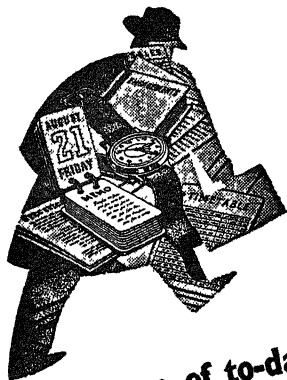
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about the cultivation of a sensibility in tune with their own age and not haunted by the ghosts of an over-venerated and supposed Golden Age,

A necessary first step was taken by the Humanists when they established their faith in reason and Nature. Henceforth the individual might submit phenomena to the test of mind, might compare and contrast, and have some confidence in the conclusions he drew. He learnt to trust the evidence of his feelings towards external nature, and then he could develop his sensibility with the guidance of an uncramping tradition and make that sensibility the touchstone of literary worth. Modern Criticism in art, and for our purpose, literature was then possible.

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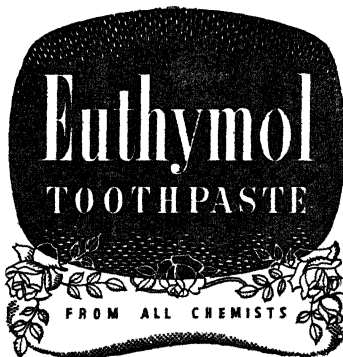
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Mr. Lees-Milne has written an interesting, accurate, and informative book, in a subject that abounds in pits I have noted but one fall—the ascription of Claremont to Brown on page 94 and to Holland on page 160. The book is well illustrated, with some particularly happy colour plates of Adam decoration from the architect's original drawings, and will for some hours revive the parched and too rarely employed passion for architecture.

EDWIN SMITH